



Barriers and Enablers of Northern Businesses and Entrepreneurship



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Executive Summary

Northern Canada's economy is uniquely characterized by its geographic isolation, with limited infrastructure, and plentiful Indigenous entrepreneurial opportunities. The North includes many large enterprises, in addition to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) led by Indigenous Peoples and Northerners, which are important to the Canadian economy but require continued support to adopt new technologies and diversify market opportunities. Indigenous and Northern



This report outlines the state of businesses in Northern Canada, including sectoral analyses, technology adoption, the impact of tariffs and changing trade agreements (such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), and the barriers and enablers of continued enterprise success.

entrepreneurs contribute economic and social value to Canada and they require continued support to realize these benefits, as well as to exercise resilience to climate change, shifting global markets, and trade agreements. This report outlines the state of businesses in Northern Canada, including sectoral analyses, technology adoption, the impact of tariffs and changing trade agreements (such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), and the barriers and enablers of continued enterprise success. Further, we discuss the challenges and opportunities for SMEs and Indigenous and Northern entrepreneurs. Interventions and enablers of entrepreneurship and SMEs are discussed within the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action. We use our research to provide recommendations for business development in Northern Canada.

The state of Northern entrepreneurship

Economic context and business environment

This report focuses on Canada's Territorial North, which encompasses Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

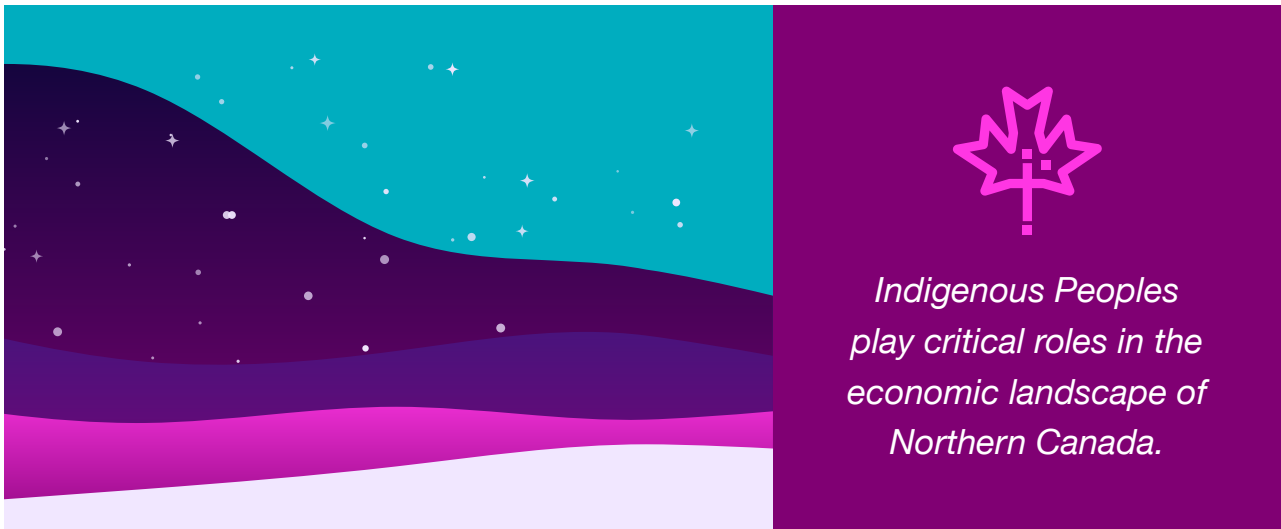
Compared with Southern Canada’s economic activities—which include advanced manufacturing, financial services, technologies and agriculture—Northern Canada’s economy is dominated by large enterprises in resource extraction, infrastructure development, and public administration sectors, as well as a growing number of small businesses exploring diverse sector opportunities. The North’s economy includes a substantial number of Indigenous Peoples, and economic reconciliation and investment is essential to addressing the TRC’s Calls to Action and the Calls to Justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+). As Northern Canada prioritizes new infrastructure and investments in capacity building and skills development, and new sector opportunities are poised, barriers need to be addressed so that rural and remote communities and Indigenous Peoples can grow their businesses and capital flows not only to large enterprises in the North. Further, culturally appropriate interventions are required to bolster a diverse economy and ensure that Indigenous Peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, education and entrepreneurship opportunities (as outlined in TRC’s Call to Action 92).

Entrepreneurship in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut

Business ownership and other business characteristics

Small Northern businesses face severe structural challenges and uncertainty following changing trade regulations and federal priorities. Comparatively, economic data on prosperity among large enterprises suggests that large Northern businesses’ financial positions are stronger than the national average. In the Territorial North, over 80% of enterprises maintain sufficient cash reserves for three months, compared to 75.6% nationally, which is largely due to capital-intensive resource operations. Among large businesses, optimism is high, with 73 to 87% expressing positive 12-month outlooks versus 65.7% nationally. Data on SMEs and entrepreneurs is minimal and less optimistic, as simplified supply chains and limited resources hinder the ability of SMEs and entrepreneurs to navigate trade uncertainty.

Critical labour challenges in the territories affect enterprises of all sizes in the North. Nunavut and the Northwest Territories report labour shortages at five times the national rate (20 to 23% versus 4.4%), while Yukon faces skilled recruitment challenges nearly double the national rate (15.4% versus 9.5%). Without skilled labour, nearly three times the enterprises in the Territorial North report operational challenges to implementing innovation—such as green practices—compared to the national rate (23 to 27% versus 8.7%); these challenges are



exacerbated among smaller enterprises, which report reduced recruitment, outreach, and retention mechanisms for new employees.

The Northern economy is dependent on exports and is vulnerable to trade uncertainty; small enterprises and entrepreneurs with simplified supply chains and limited infrastructure are disproportionately affected. Trade and export account for a large portion of GDP in Nunavut (43% of the Territories' GDP) and the Northwest Territories (36.4%), far more than Canada (25.9% of GDP), while Yukon shows minimal export activity (3.9%). Despite having only 88 exporters concentrated in large enterprises, Northern establishments average \$39.3 million in exports, and 89.9% of these exports go to the United States. Surprisingly, Northern businesses report lower tariff-related uncertainty than the national average (15.7 to 29% versus 42.9%) and demonstrate stronger financial resilience, although the long-term implications of changes to free trade agreements and economic partnerships may implicate businesses. For small businesses, the potential of market diversification is also unclear as technology adoption is very low

among businesses in the Territorial North. Across businesses of all sizes, artificial intelligence (AI) usage is almost one-half of the national rate (5.7 to 8.5% versus 14.4%). Many Northern enterprises view AI as irrelevant, mainly due to the physical nature of dominant industries like mining, construction, and resource extraction, as well as limited and inconsistent broadband and network connectivity, experienced by 67 to 83% of enterprises in the North. Access to AI skills education and usage is disproportionately lower among SMEs and entrepreneurs and requires concerted support to realize competitiveness in diverse markets.

Indigenous entrepreneurship

Indigenous Peoples play critical roles in the economic landscape of Northern Canada. In 2021, Indigenous Peoples made up 22.3% of the Yukon's population, 49.6% of the Northwest Territories, and 85.8% of Nunavut. Indigenous values are embedded into the Territorial North's businesses and is a transformative tool for Indigenous self-determination and agency in reconciliation. In the first quarter of 2025, about 11% of

businesses in Yukon, 26% in the Northwest Territories, and 53% in Nunavut, and were majority-owned by Indigenous Peoples. For SMEs and entrepreneurs, Indigenous economic opportunities are limited by a legacy of colonialism and systemic barriers, such as recognition of Indigenous jurisdiction, lack of access to financing and education, and inadequate infrastructure. Indigenous women entrepreneurs face additional barriers due to gendered expectations within their communities. There is a need to strengthen education and skills pathways to build local entrepreneurial capacity while integrating a gendered perspective.

Barriers and enablers of Northern businesses and entrepreneurship

This section examines the barriers and enablers of Northern entrepreneurship by outlining how infrastructure, institutions, cultural factors, financing, support systems, and skills development shape Northern Canada's overall market as well as its entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Infrastructure and geography

Geographic isolation, limited transportation networks and capacity, and insufficient digital infrastructure constrain Northern enterprises of all sizes. Also, entrepreneurs often lack access to capital investments that are supposed to reduce barriers for rural, remote, and Indigenous entrepreneurs in the North. Harsh climates in the North

place additional pressures on entrepreneurs, especially in sectors like agriculture and tourism, which rely on consistent climates and seasonal infrastructure. Climate conditions also affect the physical, pricing, regulatory, reputational, liability, and ancillary risks faced by businesses. Northern Canada's foundation is on permafrost, and intensifying climate change complicates the development and maintenance of transportation and civil infrastructure. While large enterprises may be able to invest in infrastructure for their operations, SMEs and entrepreneurs rely on existing infrastructure and seasonal networks. Not only is new infrastructure costly to install and maintain, but often preferential access or funding is shown to large businesses over smaller enterprises. For example, sealifts may prioritize transport for construction materials for large contractors instead of entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Underdeveloped infrastructure in the North poses serious consequences, including increased operational costs and reduced business efficiency. Indigenous entrepreneurs and SMEs in rural and remote communities often lack utility systems, rely on water and sewage tanks, and contend with frequent service disruptions. Businesses may not be serviced by common transportation and logistics companies like Amazon. Many rely on sealift or air transportation, which is seasonal and dependent on weather and transport capacity. Remote communities also lack consistent access to digital infrastructure and telecommunications, which are critical to economic market diversification opportunities.

Large enterprises may be able to invest in their own digital infrastructure, which SMEs and entrepreneurs may access, but this relies on those large enterprises choosing to make a significant investment. Future infrastructure challenges can, in part, be reduced through innovative infrastructure such as micro housing, local renewable energy, drone and airship transportation, and greenhouses, but further capacity building in traditional infrastructure networks used by SMEs and entrepreneurs is required to deliver products.

Procurement and economic development

Northern economies are distributed among several rural and small town businesses and large enterprises centralized to a few urban areas. Governments can support procurement of Indigenous enterprises and thus address some barriers to accessing the goods, services, and infrastructure requisite for regional development, trade, and entrepreneurship. Construction and infrastructure enterprises in the North struggle with labour as the local supply is low and businesses must incur additional costs to source, transport, and house general labourers, trades-people, and inspectors. However, there is insufficient data to gauge whether procurement programs are effective in supporting majority-owned Indigenous Peoples' enterprises, and how procurement potential can be maximized for SMEs.

Business support systems

Several business support systems exist in the North and seek to address disproportionate access to resources among SMEs and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs in Northern Canada face systemic barriers to general (e.g., legal, marketing) and sector-specific (e.g., technical guidance) business support, funding supply and access, as well as incubator and accelerator programs.

First, compared to Southern Canada, Northern Canadian communities have less entrepreneurial support infrastructure. As a result, government programs and regional support organizations have been designed to build businesses in the North. Federal and regional programs exist; however, the focus is still placed disproportionately on large cities, with many entrepreneurs and SMEs in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities underserved. Additionally, many programs utilize digital platforms, which makes access difficult for SMEs and entrepreneurs in communities with digital infrastructure gaps. Many general business support services are offered, which may be helpful to some enterprises, but sector-specific support is not present and may be needed for market diversification.

Second, SMEs and entrepreneurs have limited access to financing, and external investments often prioritize large enterprises and projects. In general, high transportation costs, fuel expenses, and primary supplies acquisition often deter potential investors from the North. For SMEs and entrepreneurs, concurrent

higher operating costs, insurance, and liability protection limits market participation and economic resilience. Funding programs exist for rural, remote, and Indigenous entrepreneurs but uptake is low for several reasons. Often, funding timelines do not align with seasonal transportation and enterprise requirements. Fund descriptions may also involve jargon or not be translated into local dialects or available in reader-friendly formats. These opportunities may also not be advertised through common community communication channels (e.g., lunchtime radio, community bulletins, Facebook groups), limiting visibility.

Systemic barriers are heightened for Indigenous entrepreneurs. Section 89 of the Indian Act prevents Indigenous Peoples from using property on reserves as collateral for loans. Entrepreneurs also face bias and discrimination through stricter lending criteria, higher interest rates, a lack of culturally responsive financial options, as well as language and communication barriers with financial institutions. In many cases, enterprises seeking federal support may also face challenges in budget justification; regulators and grant providers in the South may not understand the unique operational contexts in which Northern enterprises operate, and may not fund specific equipment (e.g., appropriate PPE for fishing operations in July, despite below-zero temperatures). Indigenous financial institutions may address cultural context; however, they often lack the same capacity as mainstream financial institutions. Additionally, SMEs and

entrepreneurs may not have the resources to write effective applications for Southern lenders and funders.

Third, incubators and accelerators can connect Northern entrepreneurs to broader financial resources, market opportunities, accessible shared workspaces, and tailored training and mentorship. Entrepreneur support and business incubators are a direct market response to TRC's Call to Action 92 for the private sector to increase skills training and necessary wraparound supports for Indigenous Peoples in capital markets; however, many are operated in larger cities, and entrepreneurs and SMEs in remote and rural communities across the North lack the mobility and awareness of these resources. Opportunities exist to expand program reach to remote and rural communities and should involve advertising of these supports through community channels and program delivery in rural and remote environments.

Capacity building and skills development

Capacity building and skills development are crucial for bolstering Northern entrepreneurship. Formal skills development opportunities—along with wraparound supports such as funding, family care, and hybrid educational opportunities—can greatly benefit Northern business owners, especially Indigenous entrepreneurs. Large enterprises may offer employment to Northerners, with work-integrated learning opportunities and skills pathing; however, for diverse sector

opportunities to be realized, there is a need to address skills gaps for diverse workforce participants and entrepreneurs.

First, there is a need to improve high school educational attainment in the North. This can be done by reducing competing barriers and priorities for individuals so that they may complete their post-secondary education and participate in emerging sectors.

Second, there is a need to improve access to skills training opportunities and expand upon training programs offered by large enterprises. For many Northerners, digital and transportation infrastructure barriers inhibit entrepreneurs' access to skills training opportunities, which are predominantly offered in large cities. Hybrid education opportunities may support some entrepreneurs but are not visible or accessible to rural and remote communities.

Third, where current education often includes government-led programs, large enterprises must be better engaged in skills training as is their responsibility through TRC's Call to Action 92, Section ii.

Fourth, there is a need to improve education of non-Indigenous employees and enterprises on the histories, economic realities, means of effective communication, and barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples (TRC's Call to Action 92, Section iii). For instance, many Southerners are not aware of non-verbal communication cues and the social customs of Inuit communities in the North, often leading to false-starts in economic relationship building for large businesses, SMEs, and entrepreneurs. Further, the Calls to Justice for

MMIWG2S+ support health care and natural resource sectors skills development, but gaps in other key sectors like construction, agriculture, and tourism persist.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Northern entrepreneurship ecosystem has unique geographical, climatic, institutional, and cultural barriers to economic development and market diversification. Climate conditions in Northern Canada increase physical, financial, and regulatory risks for many businesses. The market is also dominated by large enterprises in foundational resource sectors with entrepreneurs and SMEs increasingly diversifying into new sectors. While large businesses may have the capital to install and maintain enterprise infrastructure, SMEs and entrepreneurs face persistent barriers in digital and physical infrastructure, financing challenges, the lack of compatibility and access to business support systems, and limited skills development and capacity building.

Based on the research outlined in this report, we provide the following recommendations for promoting entrepreneurship in Northern Canada, and making progress on the TRC's Calls to Action and the MMIWG2S+ Calls to Justice:

- Increase investments in permanent and resilient seasonal transportation infrastructure to improve market connectivity and reduce transportation and shipping costs and timing for entrepreneurs.

- Enhance access to the broadband Internet beyond the base requirements of the Universal Broadband Fund to ensure entrepreneurs in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities have minimum technology requirements for digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, AI, and online training.
- Utilize community- and context-appropriate communication and advertising of financing opportunities, skills training, and entrepreneurship support programs.
- Work with rural, remote, and Indigenous communities to ensure that modular and scalable infrastructure and housing systems can be effectively implemented to mitigate the risks that permafrost thaw and other extreme weather conditions pose to enterprises.
- Work with Indigenous governments, associations, and community partners to address the bias in traditional financing frameworks to facilitate Indigenous entrepreneurs' access and visibility to traditional and Indigenous-specific financing mechanisms.
- Leverage procurement for economic development and supporting Northern SMEs and larger businesses.
- Develop training programs for Indigenous Peoples and Northern Canadians that consider local limitations, cultural context, sector needs, and learning requirements, supporting TRC's Call to Action 92, Section ii.
- Deliver training for non-Indigenous Peoples in the private sector on the history of Aboriginal peoples, and skills-based training on intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism to support Indigenous entrepreneurship and TRC's Call to Action 92, Section iii.
- Support sector-specific training that considers setting, language, social cues (including non-verbal communication methods)—especially in controlled environment agriculture, tourism, and construction—to encourage adoption.
- Bolster entrepreneurial training through an entrepreneurship competency framework focused on the unique needs of Northern entrepreneurs with appropriate wraparound supports.

The State of Northern Businesses and Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Northern entrepreneurship refers to the establishment and operation of businesses within Northern regions and is characterized by specific geographical, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Indigenous and Northern enterprises are important to the Canadian economy but require continued support to adopt new technologies, diversify market opportunities, and respond to climate change, shifting global markets, and trade agreements.¹ Geographic isolation, limited transportation and industrial infrastructure, and a rich Indigenous sociocultural context shapes entrepreneurial activities in the North. Using data from Statistics Canada and other sources, this report examines the current state of Northern entrepreneurship in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

The following sections highlight key business characteristics, including ownership patterns, sectoral concentration, export activities, financial resilience, operational challenges, and the impact of external factors such as climate change and trade policy.



Geographic isolation, limited transportation and industrial infrastructure, and a rich Indigenous sociocultural context shapes entrepreneurial activities in the North.

Economic context and business environment

Canada's North is a diverse region and distinct from the rest of Canada, shaping unique opportunities for Northern enterprises. While there are different definitions of Canada's North, this report focuses on the Territorial North, which includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. This is the definition adopted by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) and the Northern Projects Management Office (NPMO).²

Within the North, the Territorial North differs from the Provincial North, which is generally well-developed due to the oil and gas industry in Alberta and hydroelectric power generation in British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, and Labrador.³ Northern economies are distinct from Southern Canada's diversified, knowledge-based economy, which is driven by advanced manufacturing, financial services, technologies, and agriculture.⁴ Instead, the Northern economy is defined by the region's rural and remote geography, and large enterprises proliferate in primary resource extraction, infrastructure and construction projects, and public administration opportunities. The economic activities of large enterprises in mining, quarrying, oil and gas, and construction lead primary production.^{5,6} Infrastructure development has also been a priority in this

region due to its remoteness and ongoing reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples, leading to increased investment in skills, capacity, and new sector opportunities.⁷

Expanding these supports is requisite to allow Indigenous peoples and entrepreneurs to explore new sector opportunities and diversify their enterprises beyond primary resource and service sectors. While general barriers exist for Northern enterprises, these are not always the same or proportionate barriers for Northern entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Indigenous Peoples and economic reconciliation

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples was established as part of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement of 2007, which sought to address the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools System in Canada.⁸ As part of reconciliation, the agreement established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), tasked with preparing Calls to Action to support, share, and honour the experiences of former students, their families, and communities.⁹ Economic remuneration is within the 94 Calls to Action proposed by the commission in 2015, and progress has varied across the Calls to Action. More concerted interventions are needed to support Indigenous entrepreneurs, as many communities are still restricted in their autonomy to govern their lands for economic opportunities.

Several Calls to Action are relevant to promoting economic opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in the North, including:

- **Call to Action 19**, where private enterprise and government is tasked to ameliorate key socio-economic issues such as food insecurity, medical services, and digital connectivity as it relates to health, which intrinsically is operationalized through infrastructure investment in the Territorial North.
- **Call to Action 23**, where the government is tasked with increasing the sector participation of Indigenous Peoples in the health care system.
- **Call to Action 92, Section ii**, where Indigenous Peoples are to have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and the opportunity and capacity to contribute and benefit from economic development projects.
- **Call to Action 92, Section iii**, where non-Indigenous peoples in management and among staff across public and private sectors have skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

While the TRC stipulates terms for economic reconciliation in public and private sectors, progress has been limited and requires continued and improved efforts.¹⁰ Indigenous entrepreneurs contribute about \$48.9 billion to the Canadian economy, which could increase if systemic barriers, including access to federal procurement contracts, were addressed.¹¹ While there are diverse sector opportunities in the North and increasingly diversified economic opportunities across industries, specific interventions beyond the health care sector are limited. There has been discussion as to the value of empowering Indigenous Peoples and entrepreneurs,¹² although they are often unrelated to other TRC Calls to Action beyond Section ii and iii of 92. Where Call to Action 92 relies on the private sector, further progress can be made through other TRC commitments, such as supporting the health of Indigenous Peoples. Health care investments rely on ancillary sectors in the North and can be used to bolster the agriculture and agrifood sector (to address food insecurity), transportation infrastructure (for access to health care and resources), and housing and construction (where housing security implicates health and wellbeing).

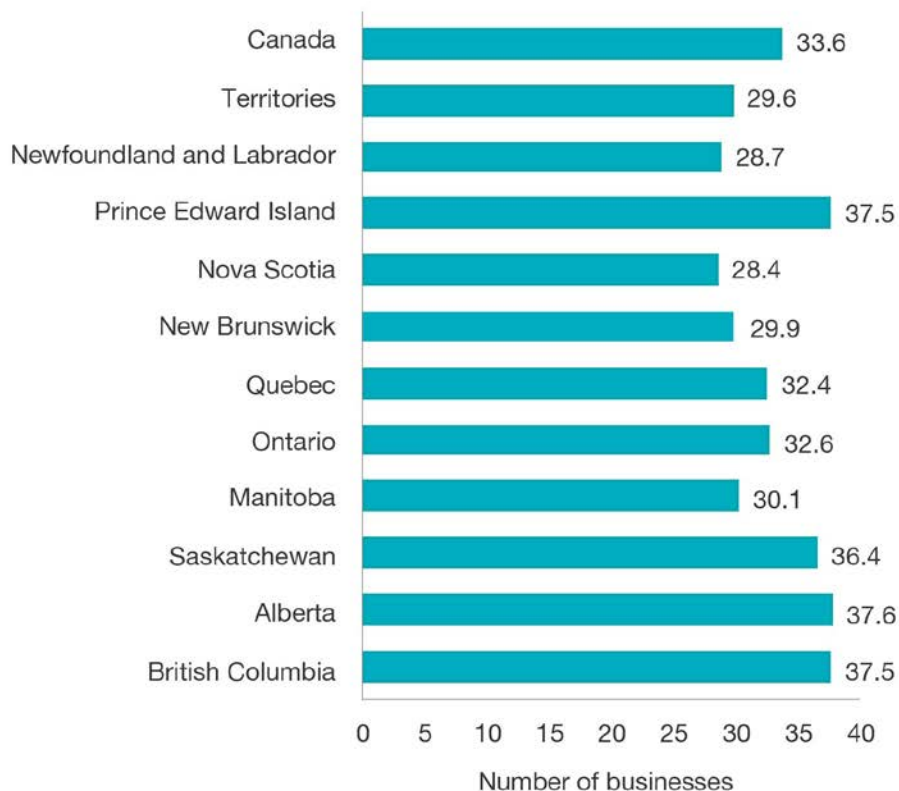
Further, economic participation and capacity building initiatives for Indigenous and Northern entrepreneurs includes support through the Calls to Justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+).¹³ In the following sections, we discuss the economic context of the North and entrepreneurship, and identify where new opportunities to improve the sector can advance stagnated TRC Calls to Action.

Entrepreneurship in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut

The size of businesses in the North is important to understanding economic resilience and enterprise capacity. Northern Territories show lower business density compared to national averages. In 2023, the number of businesses (including SMEs and large businesses) per 1,000 individuals aged 18 years and over in Northern Territories was 29.6 employer businesses, the third lowest in Canada—after Nova Scotia (28.4) and Newfoundland and Labrador (28.7)—compared to the national average (33.6)¹⁴ (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Total number of employer businesses by business size and number of SMEs per 1,000 individuals, by province, December 2023

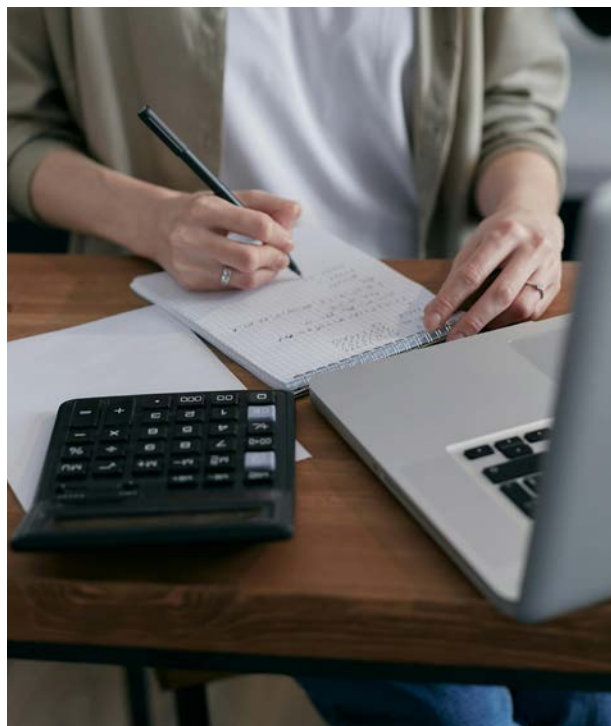


In the Territorial North, businesses size and sector vary. As of June 2025, 99.6% of enterprises are considered SMEs, with the highest sector participation in construction (11.4% of all businesses), service (8.6%), public administration (11.8%), and health care (6.6%).¹⁵ Enterprise size by sector varies, with several large enterprises (500+ employees) in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sectors (18.75% of sector enterprises), several medium-sized businesses (12.5%), and plentiful SMEs (68.75%). However, the roles these enterprises play in this sector vary; large enterprises might be responsible for operating, processing, and refinement activities, while SMEs tend to support different enterprise functions in exploration, permitting, specialized machinery operation, and consulting on operations and decommissioning.¹⁶ Pertinently, this means SMEs require a different upskilling, business support systems, and educational approach than larger enterprises, which have defined skills and educational requirements.^{17, 18}

Financial health and business outlook

Financial health

The financial health of Northern enterprises varies depending on their size. In general, large businesses in primary resource sectors demonstrate strong financial positions compared to the national average. It is important to note that these financial stability indicators are influenced by large, established operations in natural resource sectors, such

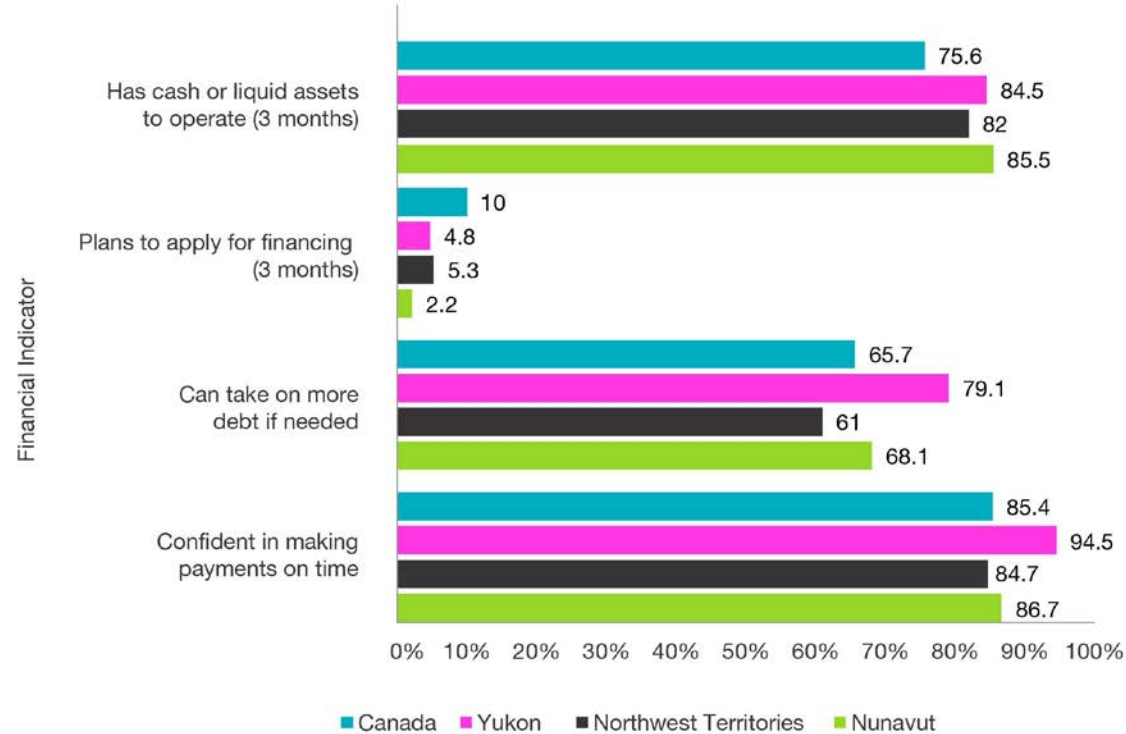


as mining, oil and gas extraction, and major construction projects. Additionally, Northern economies follow a “lumpy” economic cycle, where investment and financial outlook is high following large capital investments or commitments, such as the 2025 Government’s Major Projects Office,¹⁹ which often decreases rapidly following the initial construction of a major project.²⁰ See the appendix for a list of financial programs (Table A3). However, optimism may not reflect real dollars for enterprises, especially where investment often channels into large enterprises with the capacity to deliver large capital projects (e.g., pipelines, mines, energy generation stations, highway building), and not necessarily SMEs and entrepreneurs.

Enterprises in all three territories report sufficient cash or liquid assets to operate over the next three months— 84.5% in Yukon, 82% in the Northwest Territories, and 85.5% in Nunavut—all above the Canadian average (75.6% of all enterprises).²¹ In early 2025, they also reported lower immediate financing needs, with only 4.8% of Yukon businesses, 5.3% in the Northwest Territories, and 2.2% in Nunavut planning to apply for financing over the next quarter, below the national rate of 10%. Self-reported confidence in debt servicing is high in the Yukon (94.5% of enterprises), compared to the national average (85.4%) (Figure 2). As capital-intensive industries dominate Northern GDP (43% in Nunavut, 22% in NWT, 13% in Yukon for mining),²² and typically maintain strong financing positions, they may not reflect the economic reality of SMEs in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. A 2022 Statistics Canada survey found that small businesses were less likely to have a positive outlook over the next 12 months compared to enterprises with more than 500 employees.²³ This gap has expanded since the most recent 2024 survey, with SMEs reporting lower financial positions than larger enterprises.²⁴

Further, many enterprises across sectors still express concern over cost-related obstacles. In a 2024 Statistics Canada survey, all respondent enterprises in agriculture, forestry, and fishing and hunting across the territories expressed concern about emergent cost-related obstacles to business continuity. Variable perceptions of cost barriers exist in sectors like health care, where companies in Yukon (29.8%) and Nunavut (29.4%), perceive fewer barriers compared to those in the Northwest Territories (91.9%). Similarly, in wholesale trade, enterprises in Yukon (86.8%) and the Northwest Territories (97.9%) express greater concern compared to those in Nunavut (11.7%). In sectors dominated by SMEs there is significant variation in reported concern about cost-related obstacles ranging from the construction and manufacturing sectors, which generally report high cost-related obstacles (94.9% and 100% respectively), though low levels cost concerns in professional, scientific and technical services (33.7%).

Figure 2
Financial position of Northern businesses, Q3 2025



Business outlook and growth expectations

In the third quarter of 2025, Northern businesses had a positive long-term business outlook relative to the national average. Businesses reporting a positive outlook over the next 12 months in Yukon (73.2%), the Northwest Territories (74.8%), and Nunavut (87%) were higher than Canada overall (65.7%)²⁵ (Figure 3).

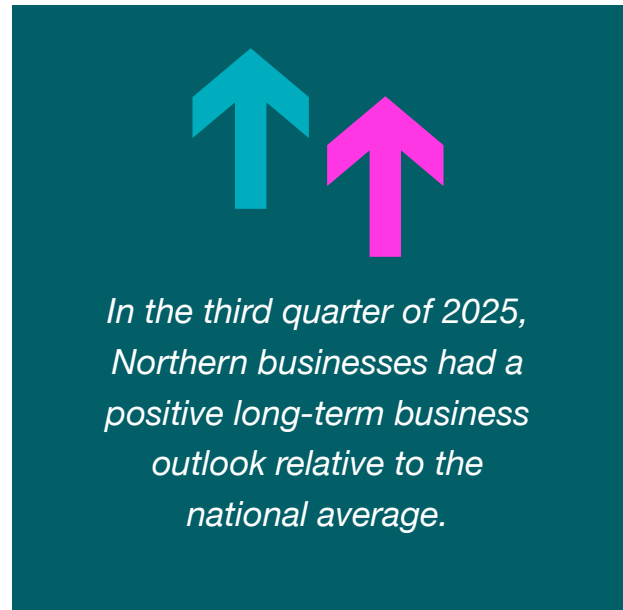
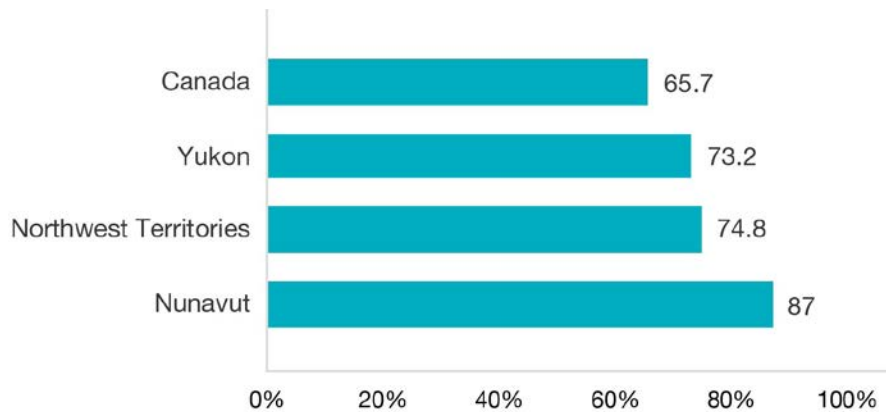


Figure 3

Optimism of future outlook for enterprises over the next 12 months, Q3 2025

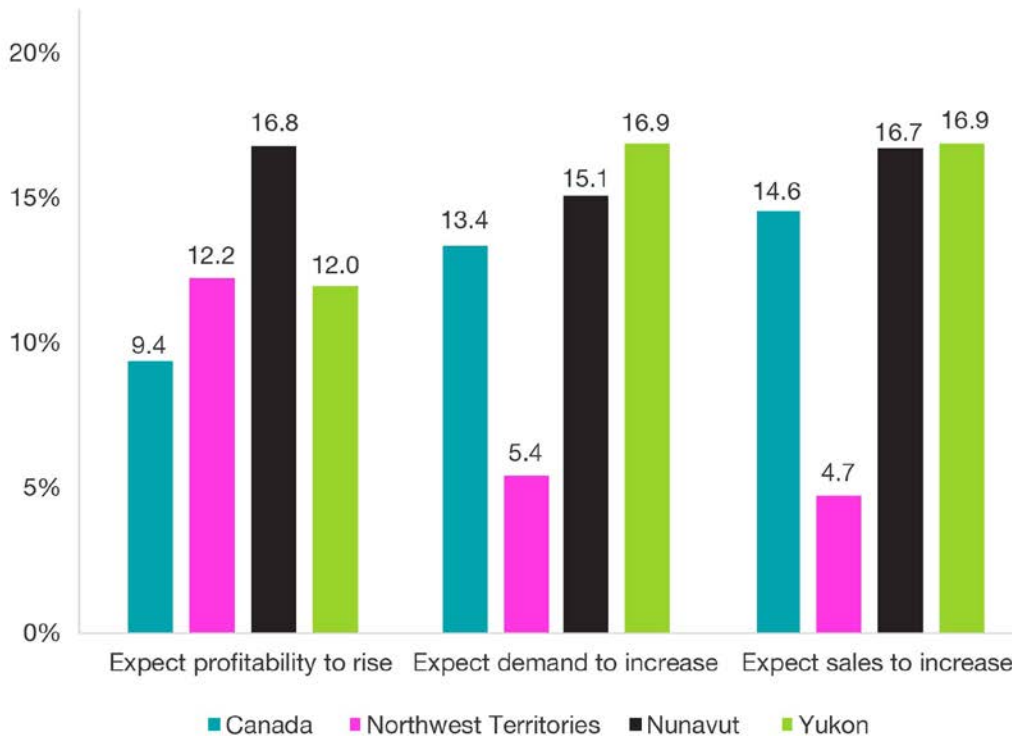


The percentage of enterprises that expect profitability to rise over the next three months in the Northwest Territories (about 12.2% of enterprises), Nunavut (16.8%), and in Yukon (12%), is higher than the national average

(about 9.4%).²⁶ Demand expectations in Nunavut (15.1%) and Yukon (16.9%) are higher than the Canadian average (13.4%), but low in the Northwest Territories (5.4%); enterprise sales expectations are similar.

Figure 4

Enterprise profit, demand, and sales expectations over the next three months, Q3 2025



Despite optimistic growth expectations, Northern businesses identify several operational challenges over the next three months that differ from national patterns, as shown in Figure 5. Nunavut (23.2% of enterprises) and Northwest Territories (20.3%) have labour shortages almost five times greater than the Canadian average (4.4%) and Yukon (4.4%). Recruiting skilled employees is a challenge for Northern businesses, particularly in Yukon (15.4%), which reports this challenge at nearly double the rate compared to Canada (9.5%) followed by Northwest Territories (11.2%) and Nunavut (8.2%). This is likely greater among enterprises in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Across enterprise size, concern over labour shortages is relatively consistent.²⁷ In Yukon, labour shortages scale with operation size

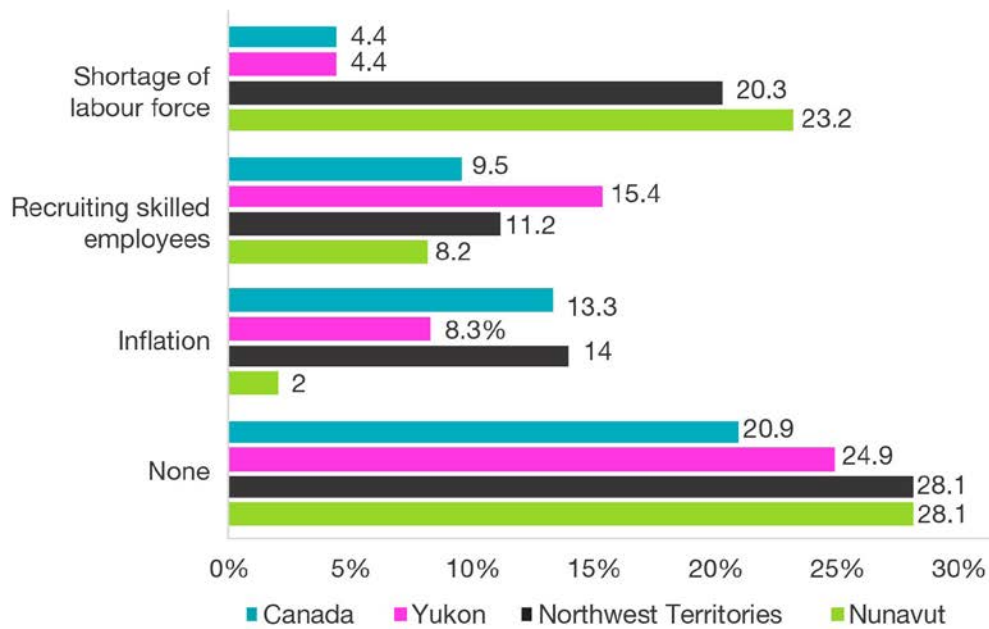
from one to four (17.6% of enterprises), five to 19 (21.7%), and 20 to 99 employees (39.7%), compared to larger enterprises with more than 100 employees (34.4%). However, similar ranges, though inconsistent trends with enterprise size, are observed in the Northwest Territories (18.5 to 47.4% of enterprises, across sizes) and Nunavut (27.5 to 43.2% of enterprises, across sizes).

In terms of inflation, while several Canadian businesses reported inflation as a challenge (13.3%), comparable averages are in the Northwest Territories (14%), with lower rates in Yukon (8.3%) and Nunavut (2%). Notably, almost one-quarter of Northern businesses report no significant obstacles—Yukon (24.9%), Northwest Territories (28.1%), and Nunavut (28.1%)—which is slightly

above Canada 20.9%²⁸ (Figure 5). These figures also do not account for changes to interprovincial and regional trade, as well as the uncertainty underlying United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which had preferential procurement with Indigenous-owned businesses in the North.²⁹



Figure 5
Most challenging obstacle expected by the business or organization over the next three months, Q3 2025





Effects of changing trade dynamics are disproportionate across enterprise sizes, with large, centrally-located enterprises with diverse supply chains more resilient compared to SMEs in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Further, business outlook varies by enterprise size participating in economic activities. In the 2024 Statistics Canada Business Survey, enterprises in the Northwest Territories foreseeing supply chain challenges were marginally higher among enterprises with one to four employees (16.3%), five to 19 (17.8%), and 20 to 99 (15.7%), compared to larger enterprises with more than 100 employees (11.9%).³⁰ In Nunavut, perceptions of supply chain burdens were consistently higher among small enterprises (15.2 to 26.5%); however, data does not exist for larger enterprises (more than 100 employees). In the Yukon, risk perception of supply chain disruption does not scale with operation size, as enterprises with one to four (13.5% of enterprises) and five to 19 employees (21.5%) report similarly high risks to larger enterprises with more than 100 employees (32.8%).

Business outlook also varies depending on the sector. It is important to reiterate that in the North, entrepreneurs and very small businesses (one to four employees) disproportionately occupy sectors like construction (45.1% of sector's enterprises), manufacturing (50%), wholesale trade (42.5%), and professional, scientific, and technical services (59.7%). These often comprise ancillary services to support public administration, as well as extractive resource sectors.³¹

Trade and exporting

In 2023, exports accounted for 25.9% of the total Canadian GDP and, despite uncertainty over global trade and export dynamics, 2025 Trade and Export figures suggest Canada's GDP continues to grow.³² However, effects of changing trade dynamics are disproportionate across enterprise sizes, with large, centrally-located enterprises with diverse supply chains more resilient compared to SMEs in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Among the territories, exports as a percentage of GDP varied; exports accounted for 43% of Nunavut's GDP, 36.4% of the Northwest Territories' GDP, and 3.9% of Yukon's GDP. Compared to the national figure, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories demonstrate a significantly higher dependence on exports³³ (Figure 6).

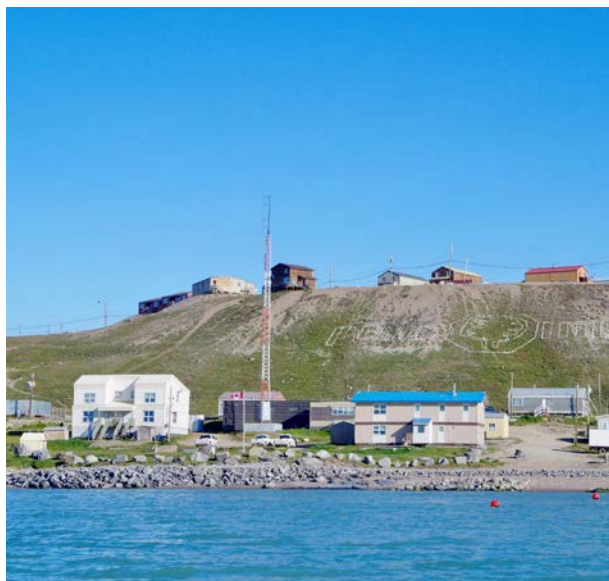
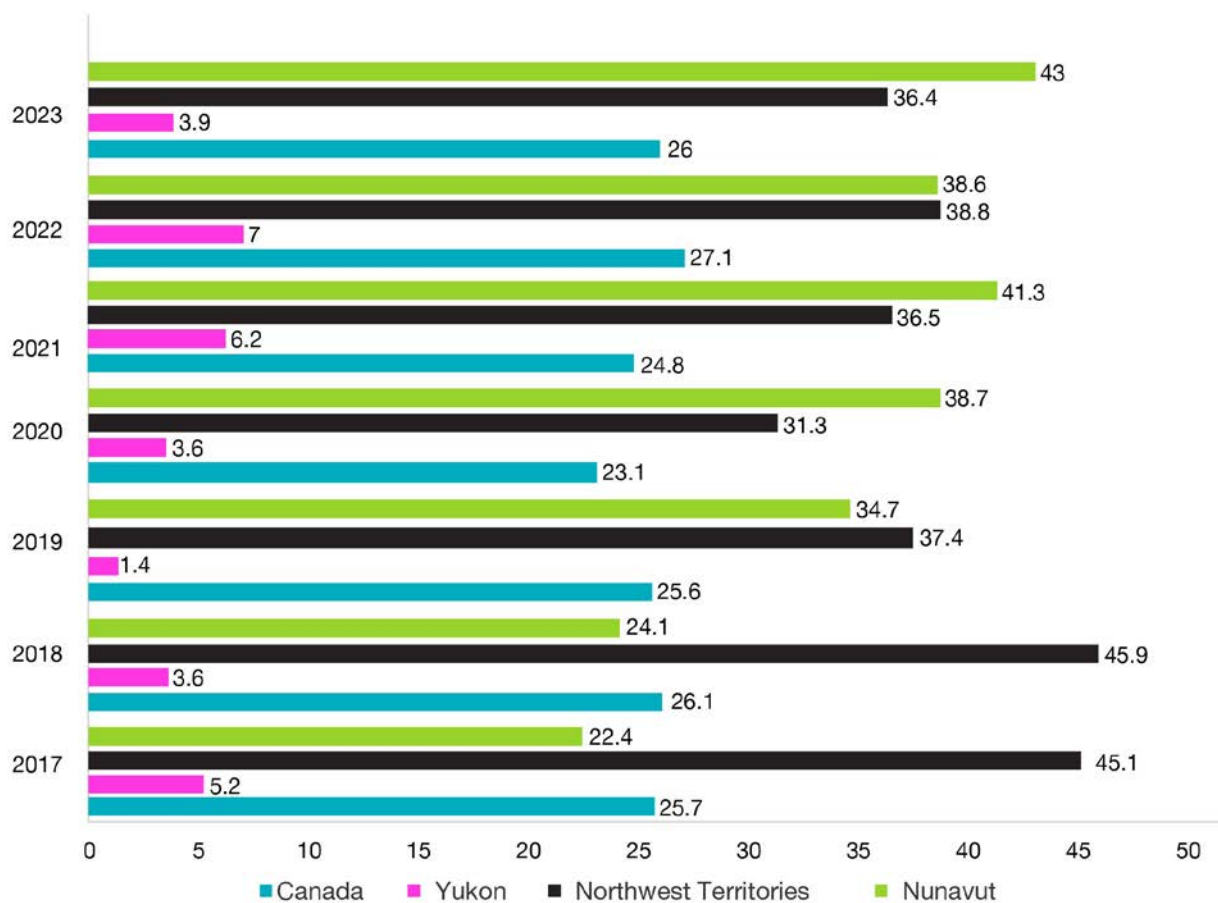


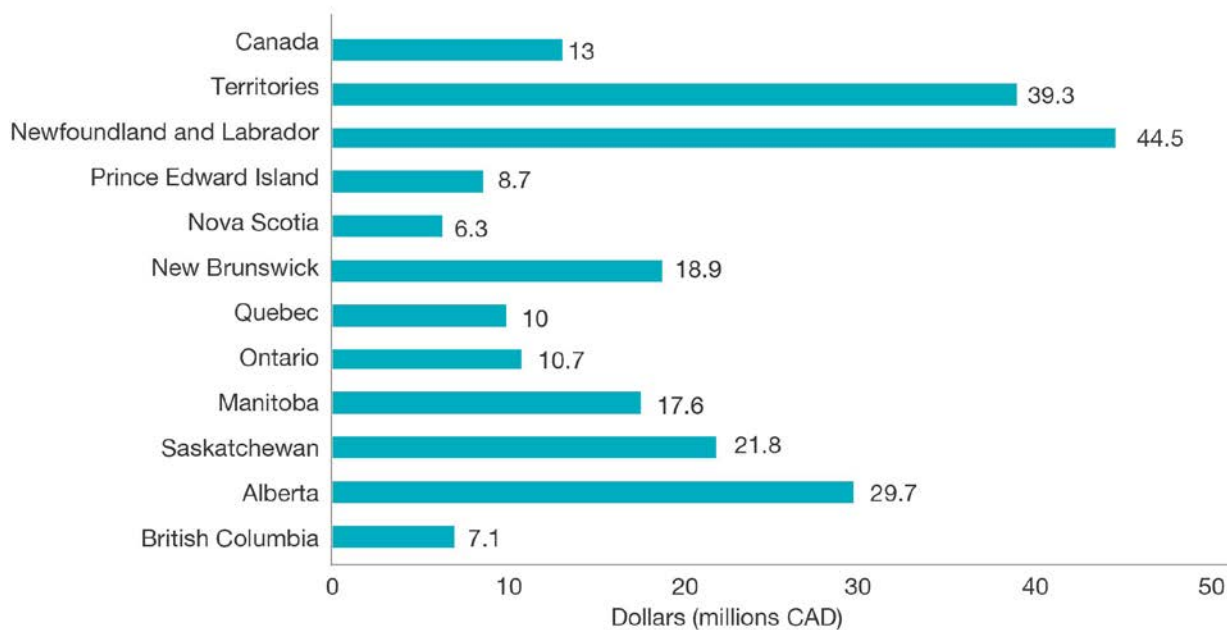
Figure 6
Exports as a percentage of GDP over the years



Businesses in the territories are less likely to export to the United States than to Canada overall. While 8.1% of Canadian businesses sold to the U.S., only 4.6% of Yukon, 5.8%, and 0.5% of Nunavut businesses engaged in the same cross-border sales.³⁴ Moreover, there were 88 exporters in the Territories, and they had an \$39.3 million average value of exports per establishment, which is much higher than the average in Canada (\$13 million)³⁵ (Figure 7).



Figure 7
 Provincial exports by average value of exports by establishments (in \$ millions), 2023





*Canadian exports have **decreased by 5.7%** between July 2024 and 2025, Canada's economic prosperity in the North is intrinsically linked to trade ties with the United States.*

While Canada leads in natural resources development and export, global geopolitical tensions may prevent Canada's market competitiveness, especially with large market dependencies on the United States. For instance, in 2024, the share of exporting enterprises in the territories to the United States (89.9% of enterprises) was above the Canadian average (86.6%).³⁶ Moreover, Canada's top exporting sectors in 2023 include energy (18%), metals and non-metals minerals (10%).³⁷ In July 2025, Canada's exports equated to \$49.72 billion, with 85.7% destined to the United States.³⁸ Canadian exports have decreased by 5.7% between July 2024 and 2025, Canada's economic

prosperity in the North is intrinsically linked to trade ties with the United States.³⁹ As a result, the diversification of trade agreements and partners is important for the Northern Territories.

The impact of tariffs

The North was initially better insulated from the impact of tariffs than Canada, however, growing uncertainty over tariffed products is implicating simplified Northern supply chains, who also participate less in the export of services following digital infrastructure gaps.⁴⁰ The territories have a lower percentage of goods that are subjected to tariffs, with only 5.7% of surveyed enterprises in the Northwest Territories, and as of September 2025, no Nunavut businesses had reported they have had tariffs imposed on goods they sell to the U.S., compared to one-third (33.3%) of Canadian businesses overall.^{a, 41} While businesses may not export directly to the United States, their trade to intermediaries who refine or produce value-added products from Nunavut do, to the effect of \$62 million as of 2024.⁴²

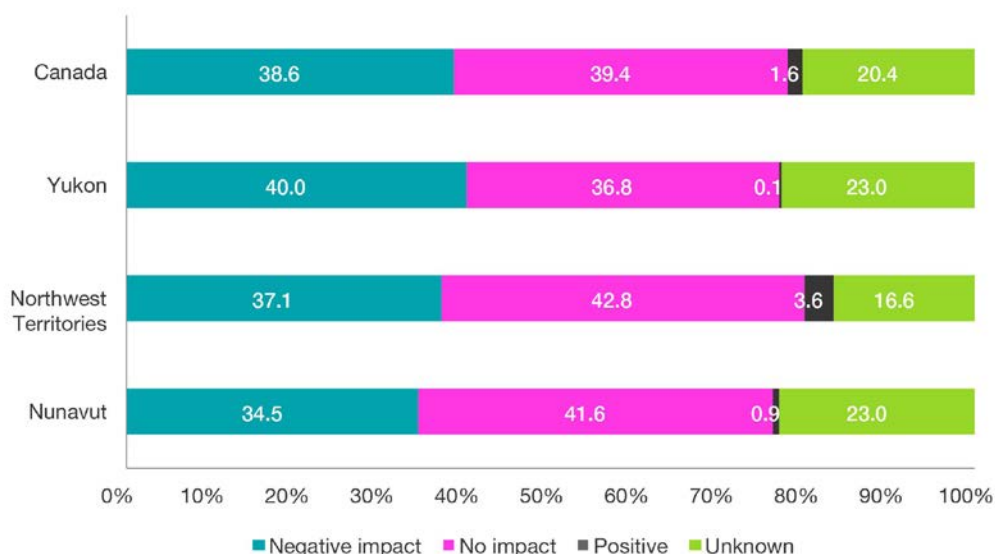
Simplified value chains for Northern enterprises mean that economic diversification is low and uncertainty in tariffed products can swiftly affect industries with limited product offerings.⁴³ As it relates to economic reconciliation, enterprises should look to further federal support in sectors including health care under TRC's Calls to Action 19 and 23. Health care delivery relies on

a The sample size for Yukon was too small, therefore data is unavailable.

ancillary sectors, such as construction and infrastructure, which have high import dependencies for materials.⁴⁴ Realizing parity in participation, and access to infrastructure to other Canadians, has constituted the sustained call for health care and supporting sector investments.⁴⁵ New and uncertain tariffs loom for enterprises, and insufficient infrastructure for new trade partnerships may implicate business continuity.^{46, 47, 48}

When looking at the effect of U.S. tariffs on goods sold by businesses in Canada, Northern Territories expressed similar concern compared to Canadian businesses overall. Perception on the impact of tariffs is comparable across the territories and the rest of Canada (Figure 8).⁴⁹

Figure 8
Impacts of United States tariffs on goods sold by businesses in Canada, Q3 2025



More than one-half of businesses in the Northwest Territories (51.4%) said tariffs would negatively affect their business, compared to enterprises in Nunavut (36.9%) and Yukon (40.5%). The response from Canadian businesses overall was consistent with Yukon (40.5%) (Figure 9).





Northern enterprises also reported fewer prospective negative consequences on their business due to the direct impact of impacts of the new U.S. administration on their communities.



Figure 9

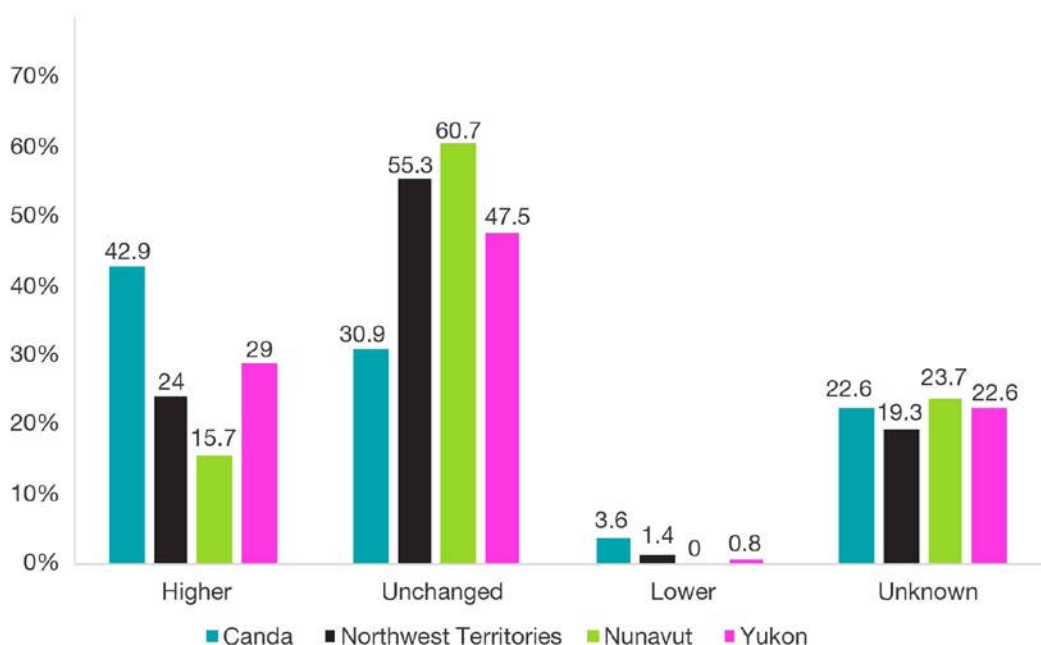
Level of impact of Canadian tariffs on goods purchased from businesses in the United States, Q3 2025



Businesses in the North also report much lower uncertainty from tariffs over the next 12 months, compared to Canada overall, as evidenced in Yukon (29%), the Northwest Territories (24%), and Nunavut (15.7%), Canada (42.9%) (Figure 10).⁵⁰

Northern enterprises also reported fewer prospective negative consequences on their business due to the direct impact of tariffs of the new U.S. administration on their communities. Almost one-third of Canadian businesses reported yes (29.1%), compared to Yukon (20%), the Northwest Territories (20.9%), and Nunavut businesses (10.2%). With regards to the magnitude of change, Northern enterprises in general are more likely to report no change to operations, compared to the Canadian average, as it relates to the impacts of the new United States administration. (Figure 10).⁵¹

Figure 10
Expected impacts of the new United States administration on Canadian business uncertainty, Q3 2025

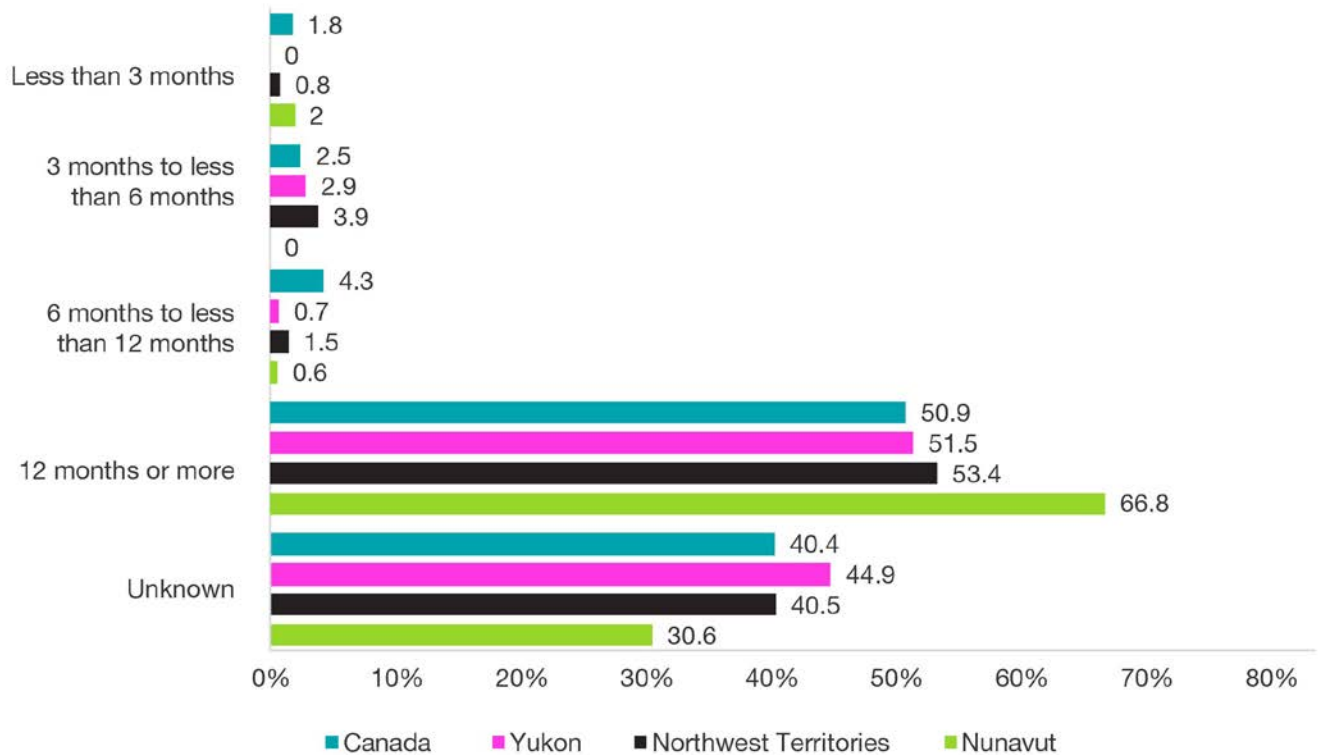


Businesses in the North also appear to be better able to withstand the effects of the tariffs imposed by the United States and Canada. Over one-half of all businesses (and two-thirds of Nunavut) reported that they could continue to operate for 12 months or more if tariffs remained at their current level⁵² (Figure 11). Nevertheless, uncertainty remains high across Canadian businesses (40.4%), with many businesses in Yukon (44.9%), the Northwest Territories (40.5%), and in Nunavut (30.6%) reporting that it is unknown how long they could continue to operate if tariffs stayed the same.



Figure 11

Length of time Canadian businesses or organizations could continue to operate if tariffs imposed by the United States remain at their current level, Q3 2025



The impact of climate

The Territorial North's latitude presents specific climactic challenges, including the remoteness of construction and material sites, extreme weather conditions, and limited daylight.^{53, 54, 55} Northern Canada is also largely disconnected from Southern Canada due to the lack of all-weather roads; this can be especially problematic during extreme weather conditions, as temperatures can reach between -30°C to -60°C. In Nunavut, rising construction costs and supply chain issues have caused significant delays in construction activities. This directly affects efforts to address housing insecurity as part of an integrated call for health care reform for Indigenous Peoples, under TRC's Call to Action 19. The Nunavut Housing Corporation has delayed construction on 36 public housing units, and the Government of Nunavut has also cancelled several building projects due to the rising costs of construction.⁵⁶

Businesses in the Territorial North show different engagement with climate change mitigation and adaptation depending on enterprise size. SMEs and Indigenous entrepreneurs tend to reflect more pro-environmental values held among communities in the North, which are reconciled against community continuity, economic stressors, and practical limitations.⁵⁷ Comparatively, large enterprises in the extractive resource sectors exhibit less alignment with pro-environmental values and climate mitigation or adaptation strategies.

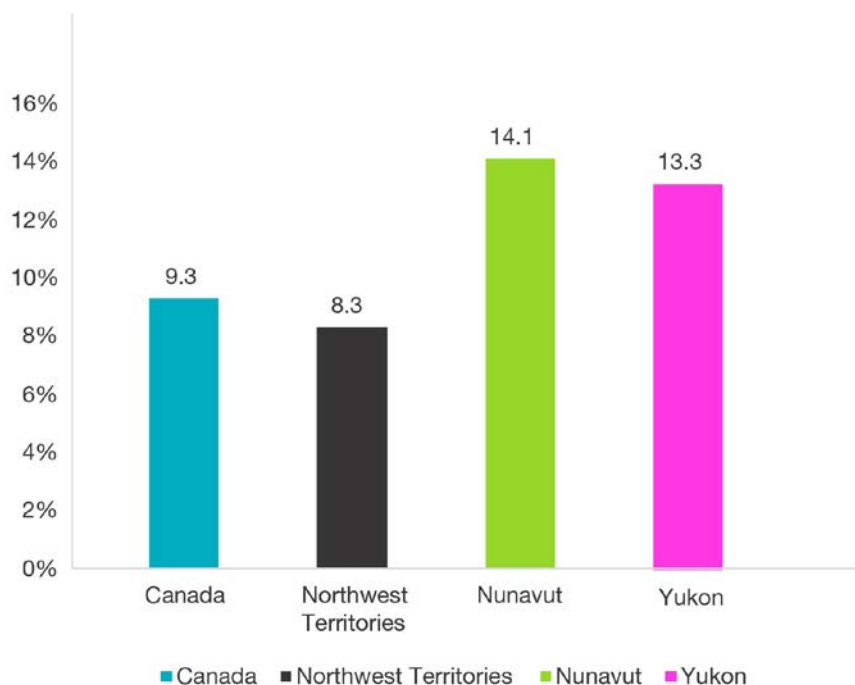
In 2021, about 9.3% of Canadian businesses had planned investments in renewable energy or energy efficiency measures.⁵⁸ The territories have differing outlooks; the Northwest Territories (8.3% of businesses) is in line with national averages, while Nunavut (14.1%) and Yukon (13.3%) lead in adoption (Figure 12). General data on the adoption of sustainability practices is available by enterprise size, but disaggregated data across the provinces and territories is not available.⁵⁹ However, in general, SMEs lead in the adoption of low-cost and value-alignment initiatives (e.g., energy-efficient devices), but lag behind in procedural interventions (e.g., changing logistics or supply chains), and environmental and emissions accounting (e.g., carbon footprint estimation, environmental and social governance reporting).⁶⁰

The Territorial North sees the effects of climate change up close.⁶¹ Many residents and communities face difficult choices, such as whether to participate in new primary resource projects to strengthen local communities or maintain bans on new extraction projects that have the potential to interfere with Indigenous Peoples' way of life.⁶²



Figure 12

Planned investments in renewable energy or energy efficiency, Q1 2021



Northern entrepreneurs face barriers when translating environmental commitments into practice. Compared to Canada, their location also appears to have a major impact on their ability to adopt green practices. Businesses in the Territorial North report that locational or on-site limitations impede their ability to implement green practices, with the Northwest Territories (26.7%), Nunavut (25.1%), and Yukon (23.5%), reporting this barrier at a rate three times greater than the national average (about 8.7%).⁶³ Northern businesses also report greater time constraints or labour limitations—26.3% in the Northwest Territories, 28.8% in Nunavut, and 27.5% in Yukon—compared to the national average of



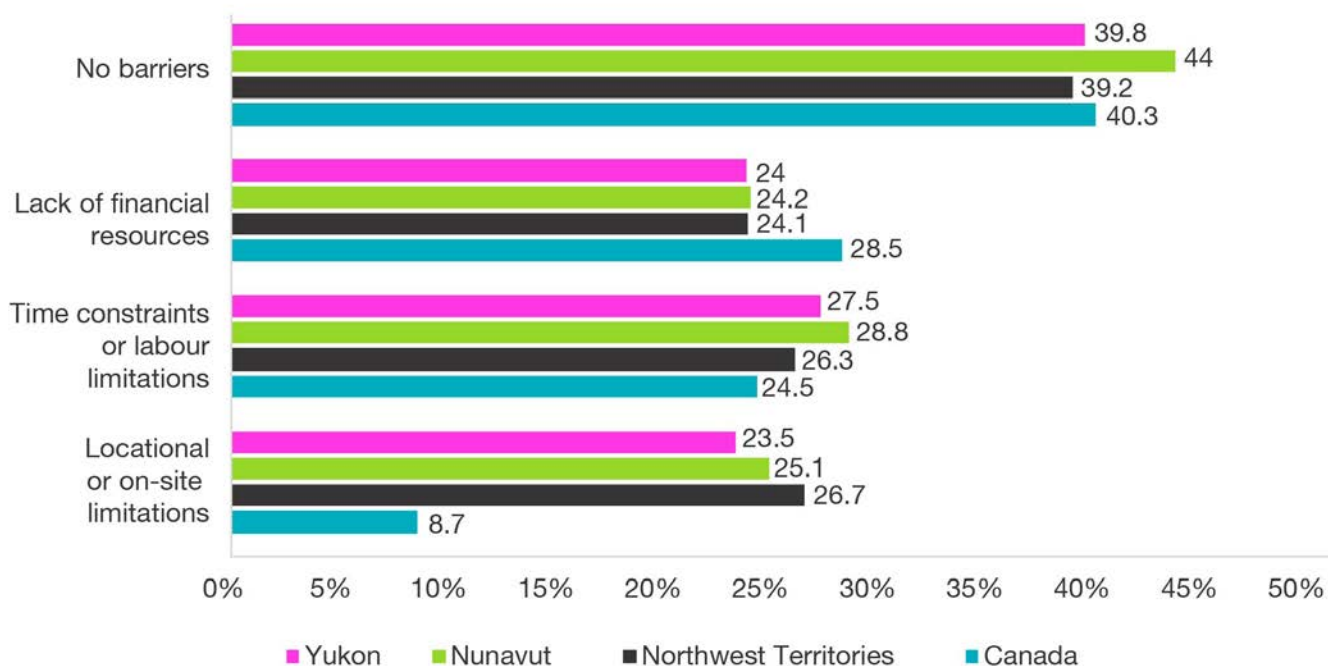
Northern entrepreneurs face barriers when translating environmental commitments into practice.

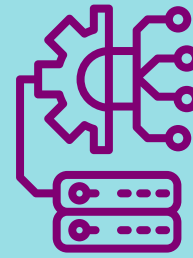
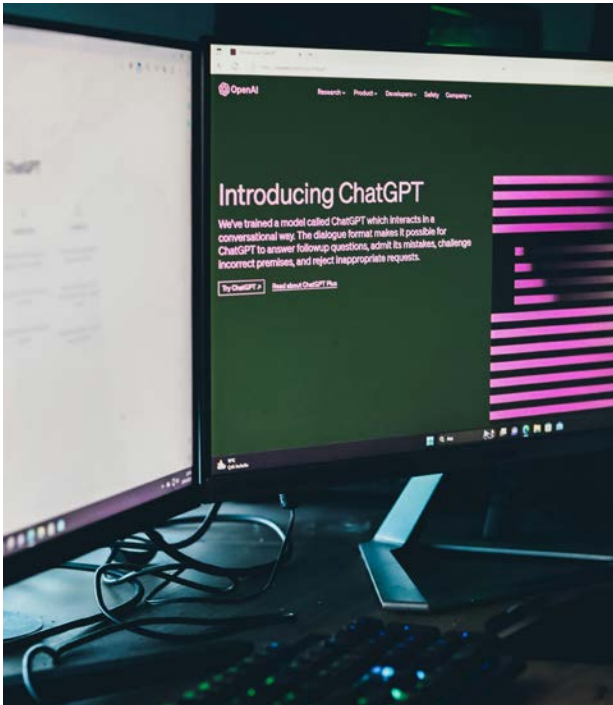
about 24.5% of enterprises. They were, however, equally as likely to report no barriers, with Yukon (39.8%), the Northwest Territories (39.2%), and Nunavut (44%), in line with the national average (40.3%). Northern enterprises were also less likely to report that the lack of financial resources was a barrier—Northwest Territories (24.1%), Nunavut (24.2%), and Yukon (24%)—compared to the national average of 28.5% (Figure 13).⁶⁴

Despite Northern Canada being well-positioned to support environmental initiatives, the data shows that businesses in the region are constrained by geographical challenges and shortages in skills, labour, and capacity,

which hinder the advancement of clean technologies and sustainable practices. Improving skills training for workforce participation in general is addressed under TRC’s Call to Action 92, with provisions for skills training in the health care sector under Call to Action 23. However, Action 92 requires actions from private entities, which need to realize the broad socio-cultural incentive to build training and education wraparound supports for Indigenous learners and make the necessary financial investments. Although important, this exists beyond businesses’ legal requirement to adopt the UN Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Persons.^{65, 66}

Figure 13
Barriers to implementing green practices in enterprise operations, 2022, Q3





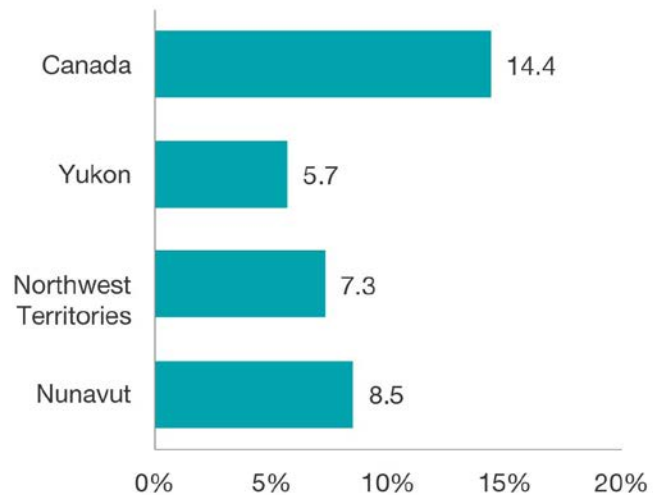
Compared to Canada overall, businesses in the territories are much less likely to use artificial intelligence (AI) over the next 12 months.

Technology adoption and artificial intelligence in business

Compared to Canada overall, businesses in the territories are much less likely to use artificial intelligence (AI) over the next 12 months. While the national average for planning to use AI over the next 12 months was 14.4%, the rate was much lower for Northern Territories, with Yukon at 5.7%, the Northwest Territories at 7.3%, and Nunavut at 8.5% (Figure 14).⁶⁷

Figure 14

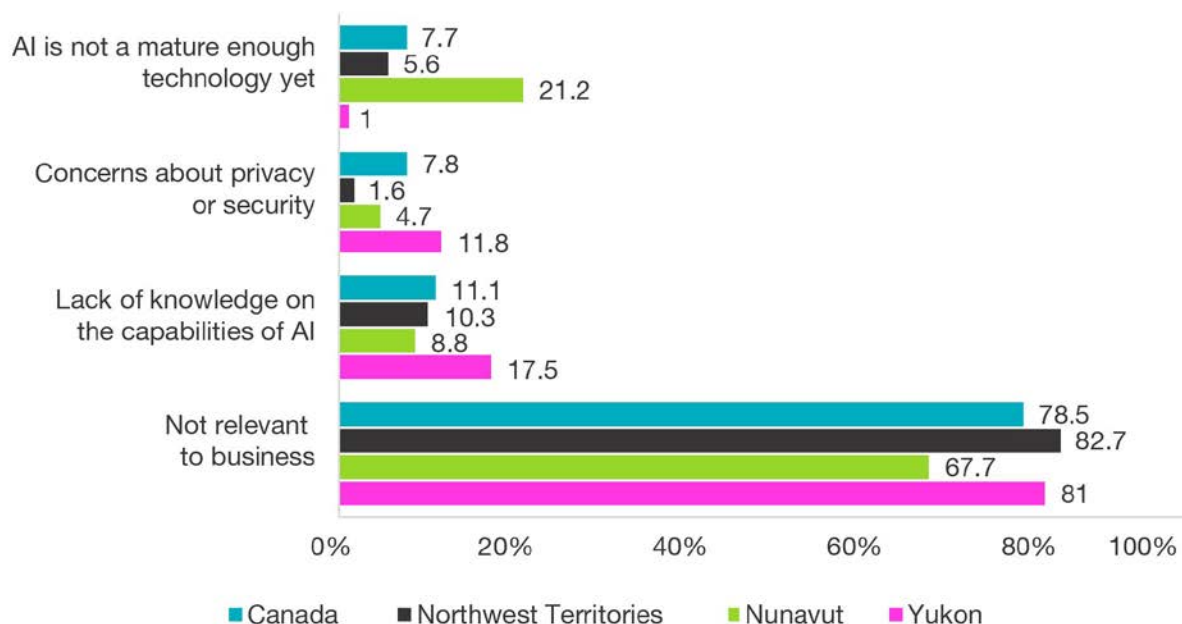
Use of artificial intelligence by businesses or organizations over the next 12 months, Q3 2025



Reasons for not planning to use AI differ from the rest of Canada. Most Northern businesses (81% in Yukon, 82.7% in the Northwest Territories, and 67.7% in Nunavut) report that AI is not relevant to their operations, compared to the rest of the country (78.5%). This reflects the dominance of physical, resource-based industries in the North where AI applications are less immediately applicable. The Royal Bank of Canada views AI education as part of their responsibility to reconciliation through economic participation for the nearly 750,000 Indigenous youth who will move through the education system over the next decade⁶⁸; however, AI literacy and training interventions among the existing workforce is not as prevalent.

Lack of knowledge about AI’s capabilities is another reason reported by many Northern businesses in Yukon (17.5%), the Northwest Territories (10.3%), and in Nunavut (8.8%), relative to the Canadian average (11.1%). Concerns about privacy and security vary from the national average (7.8% of Canadian businesses), with greater privacy concerns among enterprises in the Yukon (11.8%), and less concern reported by enterprises in the Northwest Territories (1.6%) and Nunavut (4.7%). Regarding their perceptions about AI being a mature tool, Nunavut reported the highest with 21.2% of businesses citing that AI is not mature enough, about three times the Canada rate (7.7%). Yukon (1%) and the Northwest Territories (5.6%) express minimal concern about AI maturity (Figure 15).⁶⁹

Figure 15
Reasons business or organization does not plan to use AI in producing goods or delivering services over the next 12 months, Q3 2025

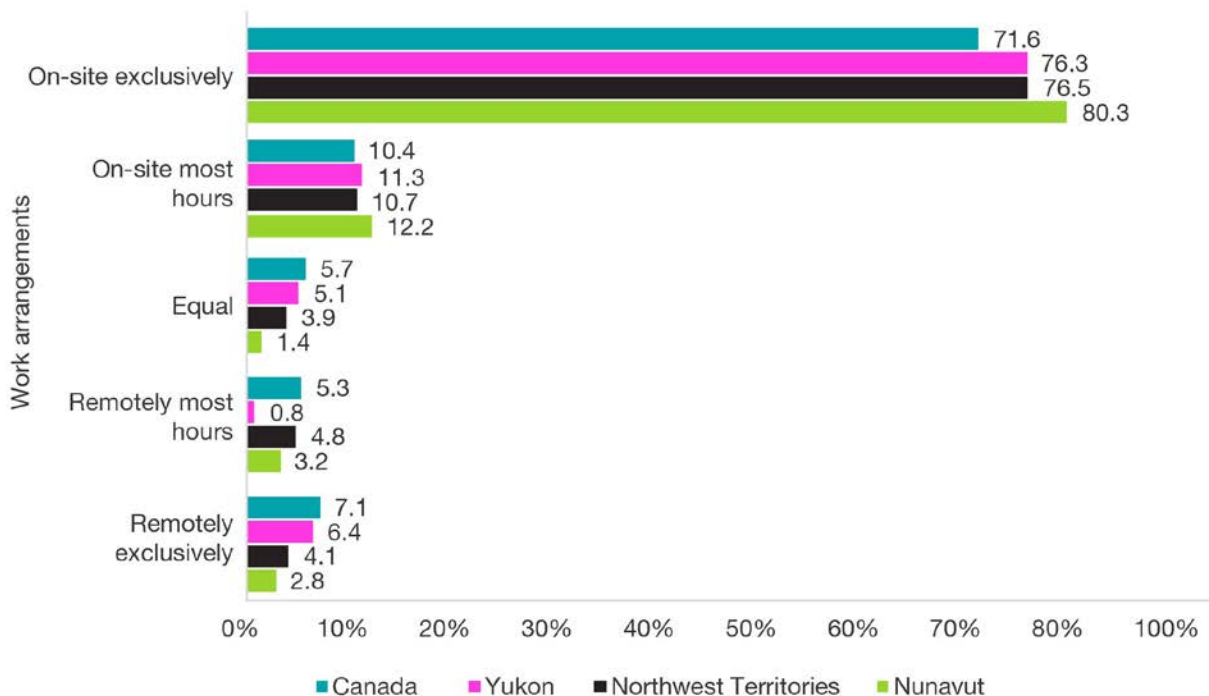


Working from home

Remote work arrangements in the Northern Territories reflect the practical realities of the dominant sectors in the region. Northern businesses reported significantly higher rates of on-site work compared to the national average. On-site work exclusively is more prevalent in the territories, as seen in Yukon (76.3% of enterprises), the Northwest Territories (76.5%), and in Nunavut (80.3%), compared to businesses in Canada (71.6% of enterprises, on average). At the same time, enterprises in the Territorial North worked exclusively remotely at a lower proportion

than the national average, with low rates in the Yukon (6.4% of enterprises), the Northwest Territories (4.1%), and in Nunavut (2.8%), relative to the Canadian average (7.1%).⁷⁰ These patterns reflect the sectoral composition in the territories (mining and resource extraction, construction, and public administration) and the fact that work in these sectors cannot be performed remotely. Further, this may not reflect unincorporated Northern entrepreneurs and thus not captured through census efforts (Figure 16).

Figure 16
Percentage of workforce anticipated to work on-site or remotely over the next three months, Q3 2025



Indigenous entrepreneurship in Northern Territories

The Northern economy and entrepreneurial landscape are fundamentally shaped by its geography and the socio-cultural values of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous entrepreneurs represent 1.9% of all registered business owners, despite making up 4.4% of the workforce; this number is expected to grow by about 23% between 2024 and 2034 due to Indigenous youths' adoption of digital tools, interest in green industries, and environmental knowledge.^{71, 72, 73, 74}

Data on Indigenous entrepreneurship across the Territorial North was not available, but in terms of business ownership, Indigenous Peoples were majority-owners of businesses in the Northwest Territories (25.5%), the Yukon (11.3%), and in Nunavut (53.4%).⁷⁵ However, not all Indigenous entrepreneurs are registered businesses and so they may not be captured in this assessment. For some, self-employment and subcontracting is the norm, which undermines data collection, policy, and practice.

Indigenous entrepreneurship is an effective tool for Indigenous self-determination and agency in reconciliation, and directly addresses the TRC's Call to Action 92.⁷⁶ The principles of entrepreneurship are historical community values, underscored by equal-opportunity and independent operations.⁷⁷ However, modern Indigenous entrepreneurship has been affected by a legacy of colonialism and systemic barriers, such as the government's lack of recognition

of Indigenous jurisdiction, inaccessible and underfunded education systems, restricted access to financing, and improper infrastructure.^{78, 79, 80} Notably, infrastructure limitations in rural and remote areas affect Indigenous Peoples' access to essential resources, including clean drinking water, adequate housing, and reliable Internet connectivity.⁸¹ Cultural and social barriers, such as racial and gender discrimination, further restrict opportunities. In addition to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls for skills support and capacity development for Indigenous Peoples, Call to Action 92 includes provisions on education for management and staff in enterprise, on intercultural competencies, conflict resolution, history of Aboriginal peoples, and anti-racism.⁸² The responsibility for TRC's Call to Action 92 was relegated to the private sector and, without support, progress on education for non-Indigenous Peoples on reconciliation has stalled, with as little 15% of enterprises engaged with Indigenous communities in any way.⁸³ A concerted educational investment is needed by the private sector to educate their employees on Indigenous Peoples, their histories, and unique barriers to realize economic prosperity among Indigenous entrepreneurs in the North.

Barriers for Indigenous Peoples' entrepreneurship is intersectional with other identities, in particular women-led enterprise. Research indicates that colonialism introduced patriarchal structures into Indigenous societies, limiting Indigenous women's access to entrepreneurial resources and support.^{84, 85}

As a result, many Indigenous women face systemic barriers such as gender bias and discrimination, loss of cultural identity, community tensions, and the enduring effects of intergenerational trauma. These challenges are compounded by economic insecurity, exposure to violence, and the ongoing social and environmental impacts of colonization and climate change.^{86, 87} All together, findings emphasize the need for an intersectional and gendered perspective to understand how Indigenous entrepreneurs experience their identity, gender, and their regional challenges.

Despite these challenges, Indigenous entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a form of decolonization that reshapes existing power dynamics between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous communities in Canada have preserved their own forms of governance and jurisdiction, as well as cultural knowledge that serve as powerful enablers for entrepreneurship. A study on the relationship between Indigenous rights and entrepreneurship proposes that Indigenous communities can leverage social capital—particularly their sociocultural values aligned with sustainability—to participate in the modern economy.⁸⁸ This includes active Indigenous participation in governance and social regulation, for example, through mutually beneficial alliances and joint ventures with non-Indigenous organizations.⁸⁹



However, scholars caution that economic development must be meaningfully balanced with engagement in Indigenous cultural values to ensure entrepreneurship accurately reflects Indigenous and community priorities. This requires addressing historical exclusion, rebuilding social capital, and achieving sustainable self-determined participation, as all are essential for fostering resilience and long-term growth for Indigenous entrepreneurship.⁹⁰ Additionally, educational access in the North remains limited by geography, infrastructure, and affordability, constraining access to training and upskilling opportunities essential for entrepreneurship.⁹¹ Further infrastructure investments and wraparound supports to improve affordability, food production and provision, and economic opportunities are requisite to realize TRC's Call to Action 92. Strengthening education and skills pathways among Indigenous Peoples and their non-Indigenous counterparts in industries on historical contexts and barriers, is also vital to developing local Indigenous entrepreneurial capacity and building an empathetic entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Barriers and Enablers of Northern Businesses and Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Supporting Northern businesses is essential to building Canadian market competitiveness, and while a variety of funding, skills, and capital supports exist for Northern enterprises, it is unclear whether they are effectively utilized, especially among rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Most often, funding and support are distributed to large enterprises, with SMEs and entrepreneurs underserved; this is evident with large investments into infrastructure projects and extractive resource sectors in the North,⁹² where SMEs and entrepreneurs do not have the capacity of large enterprises to benefit from funding opportunities.⁹³ This section explores the enablers and barriers of Northern businesses and explores how infrastructure, institutions, cultural factors, financing, support systems, and skills development differ for large enterprises from SMEs and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Canada's Territorial North.



Supporting Northern businesses is essential to building Canadian market competitiveness, and while a variety of funding, skills, and capital supports exist for Northern enterprises, it is unclear whether they are effectively utilized, especially among rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Infrastructure and geography

Entrepreneurs in Northern Canada face significant challenges due to a lack of infrastructure and geographical isolation.^{94, 95} Lower population densities and geographical isolation significantly increase the cost-per-use of infrastructure in the North.⁹⁶ Several barriers exist, including limited transportation networks and capacity, insufficient digital infrastructure, as well as the visibility of and capacity to capital investments and technologies which are supposed to reduce these barriers for rural, remote, and Indigenous entrepreneurs in the North.

First, Northern Canada is built on permafrost, which complicates the development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.⁹⁷ Many communities are also only intermittently serviced through air transportation, seasonal ice roads, as well as sealifts, which limit the operational capacities of enterprises. While large enterprises may be able to invest in infrastructure for their operations, SMEs and entrepreneurs rely on existing infrastructure and seasonal networks. Infrastructure often preferences large business over SMEs and entrepreneurs (e.g., sealifts may prioritize the transport of construction materials for large contractors instead of entrepreneurs and SMEs).⁹⁸ Consequently, disproportionate impacts are felt by smaller enterprises and entrepreneurs with reduced capacity to make infrastructure investments. Further, changes to permafrost threaten existing infrastructure and can undermine buildings, roads, and other critical systems. Large enterprises may

have the capital and resources to retrofit structures and infrastructure⁹⁹; however, this may not be possible for small businesses, who report higher cost constraints. This directly undermines TRC's Call to Action 19, where organizations and governments are to address key socio-economic issues—such as food insecurity, medical services, and digital connectivity¹⁰⁰—which rely on infrastructure to access and advance within the North. In the Northwest Territories, permafrost thaw poses a projected infrastructure loss of about \$1.3 billion across 33 communities over the next 75 years.¹⁰¹

Second, access to digital infrastructure, such as high-speed Internet and reliable telecommunications, is inconsistent and often limited to large cities in the North. Large enterprises often lead where telecommunications investments go as enterprises invest in their own digital infrastructure and access; consequently, SMEs and entrepreneurs may access, but this reduces their ability to realize autonomy on where and when they can run their businesses.¹⁰² Large businesses tend to maintain their position in primary resource sectors, while entrepreneurs and SMEs diversify into new sectors; without reliable access to digital infrastructure, it is unclear how they are to access e-commerce, online training opportunities for accelerators, incubators, and training programs if they are located outside of major cities.

Additionally, cost of access is often high for Northern customers. Data from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada shows that, with regional providers and numerous operators, consumer costs often decline between 6 to 22%, which emphasizes the need for competition among data and service providers.¹⁰³ Northern cities have minimal operators, and average costs across lower-service wireless providers mean Northern consumers pay about 26.8% more. The economic burden is also likely greater, as the cost does not include service disruptions in the North, low coverage across rural and remote communities, and reduced capacity among these communities to purchase telecommunications plans relative to the rest of Canada. Further, sunspots can lead to inconsistent coverage, even where networks are established.¹⁰⁴ Where online education and e-commerce opportunities are proposed for Northern entrepreneurs, higher Internet speeds are required. Analysis of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada data shows that Internet costs 52% to 129.9% higher in the North compared to the rest of Canada, furthering the digital divide.

Subsequently, underdeveloped infrastructure raises operational costs and reduces efficiency for businesses, particularly family and small businesses, in the North.¹⁰⁵

Third, while a variety of infrastructure investments and innovations are poised for the North, there are discrepancies among who receives the funding and the feasibility of innovative technologies. For instance, infrastructure such as micro housing, local renewable energy production, and drone and airship transportation systems are suggested to help mitigate the infrastructure constraints present in the North.¹⁰⁶ However, SMEs and entrepreneurs in Northern communities often do not have the capacity to support implementing these systems, especially outside of larger cities. These innovations, owing to infrastructure access and skills capacities of large enterprises, are disproportionately deployed by large businesses.¹⁰⁷ For entrepreneurs seeking to use these technologies, the import and housing of labour, contracting, and permitting is often beyond individual—let alone community—capacity, and can lead to shipped resources and modular infrastructure being left abandoned and underutilized. This was a noted challenge in deploying greenhouses by SMEs across the North for local food production and skills training initiatives.¹⁰⁸ Further, while the Territorial North receives a significant portion of infrastructure and housing construction investments, diverse entrepreneurs are often not the recipients of funding support. Grants Office Canada finds that Northern small communities often do not see advertisements for infrastructure funding, and given language and knowledge barriers, may not know how to search for opportunities online.¹⁰⁹

Climate impacts on business

Northern Canada's weather and climate conditions create additional pressures on businesses of all sizes, although the effect on supply chains, infrastructure, and access are disproportionately borne by SMEs and entrepreneurs.¹¹⁰ In general, Northern geographies are more vulnerable to changing temperature and precipitation, seasonal climate variations, and extreme weather, creating additional operational and cost challenges for businesses. Such challenges are especially evident in sectors like agriculture and tourism, which are reliant on climate conditions. Agriculture in the North is a new practice for many communities and is already limited by a short growing season.¹¹¹ The climate unpredictability within these regions can limit the sustainability and growth potential for the businesses.^{112, 113, 114}

A recent Yukon University report examined the climate risks facing businesses of all sizes in the territory. The report revealed that climate change affects the physical, price, regulation, reputation, liability, and ancillary risks for businesses. During extreme climate events, businesses face physical challenges such as damage to buildings and assets, as well as heightened exposure to harmful conditions like extreme temperatures, which disrupt business operations and threaten stability. These conditions further affect price and material costs due to supply chain delays, and property and asset devaluation. Entrepreneurs and SMEs are disproportionately affected as they tend to have reduced capital and agency

to repair and maintain capital assets following climate-induced damages. Businesses must also adapt to evolving regulations and requirements, which may shift depending on climate priorities and influence the availability of funding opportunities. Larger enterprises are generally better equipped with regulatory expertise and supply chain diversification and can adopt changes to meet regulatory requirements, whereas, in many cases, SMEs and entrepreneurs are unaware of their regulatory requirements.¹¹⁵

At the same time, these challenges could undermine customer loyalty and reduce investment appeal, especially regarding sustainability performance. Climate change is increasingly requiring businesses to disclose climate-related risks for liability purposes. At the territorial level, climate change can pose ancillary challenges within the public sector that indirectly affect all businesses, including the loss of natural capital, vulnerabilities in public infrastructure, and pressures on health services. Overall, climate change can produce trickle-down effects that permeate businesses and the broader economy.^{116, 117} Ensuring SMEs and entrepreneurs are not disproportionately affected requires continued support for regulatory skills training, technical skills to deploy sustainability innovations, as well as capital and risk management support to promote resilience among small enterprises and for Northern entrepreneurs.

Procurement and economic development

Public procurement—guided by federal and provincial frameworks—serves as a key driver for shaping economic opportunities in Northern Canada. Government procurement can help address these gaps by providing goods, services, and infrastructure projects that estimate regional development and trade opportunities. To support local participation, several Northern jurisdictions have developed regional procurement frameworks that prioritize local businesses and SMEs (Table A2). These programs intend to facilitate Indigenous and Northern entrepreneur participation in major resource and infrastructure projects and respond directly to TRC’s Call to Action 92 and sector-specific calls under Call to Action 23. However, there is insufficient data on program effectiveness to gauge the recipients of project funds. For instance, the Northwest Territories’ Business Incentive Policy offers a 10 to 15% rate subsidy on procurement to majority-owned Indigenous Peoples’ enterprises. However, data from 2016 to 2020 shows that less than 1% of contracts year over year (0.7% to 0.9%) are benefiting from this incentive; this suggests procurement potential is not being maximized and SMEs and entrepreneurs are not benefiting from procurement programs to the fullest extent.¹¹⁸



Business support systems

Northern communities have significantly less business support infrastructure compared to Southern economies; they often have less access to funding and incubator and accelerator programs may not reach them. Several business support systems exist in the North that seek to address disproportionate access to resources among SMEs and entrepreneurs.

Support services

A variety of general government programs and regional business support organizations offer resources to entrepreneurs in the territories (Table A2). Our review of existing business support services shows that many offer general assistance, such as legal, marketing, and financial advice, regulatory consultations requirements for businesses, and resource opportunities for general business operations.

While a variety of initiatives exist, program advertisements are often restricted to large cities and do not reach entrepreneurs and SMEs outside of capital cities. Some programs, such as Prosper NWT, fund entrepreneurs beyond major cities (about 55% of disbursement in 2024),¹¹⁹ but data on others are not readily available. In many cases, business support services are accessed by enterprises of all sizes in urban areas, with rural and remote SMEs and entrepreneurs underserved.

Many programs also utilize digital platforms, which present challenges to communities with digital infrastructure gaps. These services may be helpful to some enterprises, but sector specific support—which is needed for market diversification—is often unavailable. While large businesses in extractive resources and administration sectors tend to maintain traditional enterprise models, SMEs and entrepreneurs benefit from targeted programs. Entrepreneurs are poised to realize sector diversification in a variety of industries in the North, including tourism,^{120, 121} renewable energy, food production,¹²² commercial fisheries, and cultural and traditional sectors; however, additional support is needed to help them reach markets. Further data is needed to understand how, and if, businesses support systems may reach remote, rural, and Indigenous Peoples across a variety of sectors.

Financing and access to capital

Enterprises in the Territorial North face systemic barriers to accessing financing.¹²³ Higher operational costs due to the unique combination of geographical and demographic factors in the region deter investments in operations of all sizes.¹²⁴ Potential investors may perceive this as increased financial risk and be discouraged from investing in businesses in rural Northern regions. Large enterprises may have access to funding opportunities and relationships that are not available or applicable to SMEs and entrepreneurs. Traditional approaches to financing also present barriers for SMEs and entrepreneurs, as credit history, collateral, and capital to access loans are often required. Northern entrepreneurs, and those living on reserve, face additional structural barriers as they cannot use on-reserve property for collateral following Section 89 of the Indian Act.

Further, significant federal investments, especially those in infrastructure and extractive resource sectors, disproportionately support large enterprises (Table A3). Testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs highlights most funding goes to salaries for consultants and contractors, or large enterprises, and does not flow to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.¹²⁵ The 2019 *Indigenous Economic Progress Report* identified that Indigenous and Northern businesses often lack knowledge of where and how to apply for financing, as well as

types of available funding and eligibility criteria.¹²⁶ This echoes data on the use of preferential procurement policies; while funds are made available, there is insufficient data to know if funds are effectively mobilized to the communities and sectors in which they are intended.^{127, 128}

Indigenous entrepreneurs face more systemic barriers and discrimination in acquiring funding, including racial bias that can cause stricter lending criteria, higher interest rates, and a lack of culturally-responsive financial options.^{129, 130} While Indigenous financial institutions exist to address these gaps, they are not sufficient nor near parity with Southern financial institutions and their offerings to entrepreneurs.^{131, 132} Similarly, SMEs and entrepreneurs may not have the resources to write effective applications for Southern lenders and funders. A list of funding sources available for Northern entrepreneurs is summarized in the appendix (Table A1).

Incubators and accelerators

Incubators and accelerators can be important mechanisms in helping entrepreneurs overcome the challenges they face, although the research on their effectiveness is uneven.¹³³ Incubators target early-stage companies, providing them with resources and support needed to establish themselves during their initial development stages; meanwhile accelerators focus on scaling and growth.¹³⁴ Across Canada, there are more than 150 incubators and accelerators,¹³⁵ but they tend to be concentrated in large urban centres in the South.



Legacy impacts of colonialism and forced assimilation to the residential school system have created community and mental health barriers to participating in institutionalized education for many groups.

A review of programs in the North is available in the appendix (Table A2). In rural and remote areas, the advertisement—let alone resources to access opportunities—is limited. While the COVID-19 pandemic supported more online incubators, the digital infrastructure gaps and costs mean that remote and rural communities may not be engaged. In addition, when designing successful programs in the North, language, literacy, and cultural appropriateness require careful attention. Data on incubator and accelerator program usage in the North is often limited to large cities,¹³⁶ leaving rural, remote, and predominantly Indigenous communities underserved.

Capacity building and skills development

Capacity building and skills development are crucial drivers for advancing the Northern economy. Legacy impacts of colonialism and forced assimilation to the residential school system have created community and mental health barriers to participating in institutionalized education for many groups. Today, high school graduation rates in the North lag behind their Southern counterparts. In primary resource sectors dominated by large enterprises, organizations have the capacity to offer employment to Northerners with work-integrated learning opportunities and skills pathing. However, for diverse sector opportunities to be realized, skills gaps for diverse workforce participants and entrepreneurs must be addressed; this is especially true where opportunities for SMEs and entrepreneurs to diversify into other markets and industries is contingent on post-secondary studies.¹³⁷ Research suggests a pressing need for skills-based training across sectors.¹³⁸ The Conference Board of Canada forecasts that, of the top 50 emerging occupations across the Territorial and Provincial North, all will require some form of post-secondary education.¹³⁹ Again, large enterprises in primary sectors (e.g., mining enterprises) may have the capacity and resources to offer these skills training opportunities,¹⁴⁰ however, SMEs have limited resources to deliver in-person training across geographically-distant communities and entrepreneurs face challenges accessing training, which is often delivered in

central locations. Further, for SMEs and entrepreneurs in remote environments, limited telecommunications infrastructure means access to training programs is constricted. Many programs are also designed from the South and evaluated for success from Southerners, which may not be applicable to businesses of any size in the North.¹⁴¹

Some research suggests customized approaches and wraparound supports can improve success. For instance, Contact North implemented the Northern Entrepreneurs Accessing Training program and found that asynchronous education, training allowances, and partnering with local organizations for administration helped realize a 74% completion rate among 500 entrepreneurs in the North.¹⁴² However, many programs do not collect data, nor is it clear if data is collected from programs are adapted to the context of Northerners to improve retention and use.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Northern entrepreneurship has a unique and complex ecosystem shaped by distinct geographical, climatic, institutional, and cultural factors. This report examined the state of entrepreneurship across Canada's Northern Territories: Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The data and the review of literature revealed challenges and opportunities for business development in the region.



Northern entrepreneurship has a unique and complex ecosystem shaped by distinct geographical, climatic, institutional, and cultural factors.

Current challenges

The sectoral concentration in resource extraction provides economic opportunities for large operations but creates challenges for diversification and growth of smaller businesses. Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction account for different quantities of GDP in Nunavut (43%), the Northwest Territories (22%) and Yukon (13%); these are all substantially higher than the national average (about 5%). This dependence on natural resources makes Northern economies vulnerable, especially smaller businesses struggling with limited infrastructure support and market access. Where infrastructure investments exist, priority is often given to large enterprises, and not Indigenous and Northern community-led construction. In addition, businesses in the Northern Territories face persistent operational challenges, including labour force shortages, difficulties recruiting skilled employees, and the compounding effects of geographical isolation and infrastructure limitations.

Persistent barriers

Northern entrepreneurs face multifaceted barriers that affect business operations and growth. For example, underdeveloped infrastructure, geographical isolation, extreme weather conditions, and limited digital connectivity create operational challenges and increase costs for businesses.

Financing barriers are acute for Indigenous entrepreneurs, who face systemic discrimination, restrictions from the Indian Act preventing the use of reserve land as collateral, and housing insecurity that restricts their access to traditional financing mechanisms.

There are also limitations with skills development and capacity building. Lower high school graduation rates, limited access to post-secondary education, and curricula that fail to account for Northern realities restrict the development of the skilled workforce needed for business growth and diversification.

Businesses also face increasing physical, financial, and regulatory risks because of climate change; this is especially felt by sectors in the North, like agriculture and tourism.

Indigenous entrepreneurship

Indigenous entrepreneurs represent a substantial and growing component of Northwest economies. In the Northwest Territories (25.5% of enterprises), Yukon (11.3%), and Nunavut (53.4%) are owned by Indigenous Peoples. However, not all Indigenous entrepreneurs are registered businesses and may not be captured in this assessment. For some, self-employment and subcontracting are the norm, which undermines data collection, policy and practice. Despite facing systemic barriers rooted in colonialism, Indigenous entrepreneurship has great potential for economic reconciliation and sustainable development. Indigenous communities also possess unique sociocultural values that can drive innovation in sectors such as tourism and food systems. The Indigenous population is young and growing, with Indigenous entrepreneurship expected to increase by about 23% between 2024 to 2034.

Recommendations



Increase investments in permanent and resilient seasonal transportation infrastructure, to improve market connectivity and reducing transportation and shipping costs and timing.



Enhance access to the broadband Internet beyond the base requirements of the University Broadband Fund to ensure entrepreneurs have minimum technology requirements for digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, artificial intelligence and online training.



Support infrastructure investment and northern-industry led construction that withstands intensifying climate conditions, and built with planning, design, through end-of-use that incorporates cultural norms and needs and recognizes the costs and operational challenges of building in the North (e.g., sea freight, building material requirements, airfare costs).



Utilize innovative modular and scalable infrastructure and housing systems to mitigate the risks of permafrost thaw and other extreme weather conditions, drawing upon traditional knowledge from ideation through occupancy, with requisite support for communities to bring and house skilled labour during installations.



Work with Indigenous governments and associations to address the bias in traditional financing frameworks to facilitate Indigenous entrepreneurs' access to traditional financing mechanisms.



Leverage procurement for economic development and supporting Northern SMEs and larger businesses.



Co-develop and co-lead training programs for Indigenous Peoples and Northern Canadians that consider local limitations, cultural context, sector needs and learning requirements: supporting TRC's Call to Action 92, Section ii.



Deliver training for non-Indigenous Peoples in the private sector on the history of Indigenous Peoples, and skills-based training on Intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism to support Indigenous entrepreneurship: supporting TRC's Call to Action 92, Section iii.



Sector-specific training, particularly in controlled environment agriculture, tourism, and construction, is needed to support technological advancements in agriculture and related fields, building upon existing sector-based supports to health care and natural resources from the MMIWG2S+ Calls to Justice.



Develop an entrepreneurship competency framework primarily focused on unique needs of Northern entrepreneurs with appropriate wraparound supports, including culturally-relevant training opportunities and educators, locational and redundancy among engagement options (e.g., work-integrated learning, hybrid education, educational programming in community), traditional language supports, and reducing industry silos to utilize wholistic Indigenous values into cross-cutting industry values (e.g., integrating tourism opportunities to showcase traditional construction techniques or food production practices).



Appendix

Table A1

Financial resources available for entrepreneurs and businesses in the Territorial North

Program	Type	Key Features	Scope (Territory)	Link
Northern Indigenous Economic Opportunities Program (NIEOP)	Grant	For Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses; supports start up, expansion, skills training, feasibility studies; administered by local service delivery partners	Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1385486556734/1385486648146
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)	Grant	Supports startups, expansions, Indigenous and non-Indigenous entrepreneurs; delivered via CanNor and regional partners	Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1368815784186/1368815799374
Government of Northwest Territories – SEED Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development	Grant	Startups, expansion, asset acquisition, market development, tourism, emergency relief; locally managed programs	Northwest Territories	https://www.itg.gov.nt.ca/en/SEED
Local Dev. Funds (regional Indigenous partners)	Grant/ Loan	Targeted at Indigenous community businesses; provided by regional associations (e.g., Kivalliq, Kakivak)	Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut	https://kakivak-learning-centre.thinkific.com/courses/kivalliq-inuktitut
dāna Näye Ventures	Grant/ Loan	Targeted at Indigenous community businesses; provided by regional associations (dāna Näye Ventures)	Yukon, Northern British Columbia	https://www.dananaye.com/

Program	Type	Key Features	Scope (Territory)	Link
Métis-Dene Development Fund	Grant/ Loan	Targeted at Indigenous community businesses; provided by regional associations (Métis Dene Development Fund)	Northwest Territories	https://www.mddf.ca/
Community Futures Program	Loan	Loans, advisory, and business support services for small businesses in northern and rural regions	Northwest Territories	https://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/services/community-futures-program
Government of Northwest Territories – Business Funding Programs	Grant/ Loan	Sectoral, community streams (e.g., market development, asset support, trade, recovery, etc.); covers broad spectrum of entrepreneur needs	Northwest Territories	https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/services/funding-programs

Table A2

Business support organizations and programs in the Territorial North

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Federal Programs			
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)	A federal regional development agency supporting economic growth, diversification, and innovation across Canada's three territories.	Pan-territorial	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/
Indigenous Financial Institutions	Indigenous-controlled, community-based financial organizations designed to address financing gaps for Indigenous entrepreneurs, although with less capacity than mainstream institutions	Pan-territorial	https://nacca.ca/indigenous-financial-institutions/

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Grant and Loan Programs			
Northern Indigenous Economic Opportunities Program (NIEOP)	For Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses; supports start up, expansion, skills training, feasibility studies; administered by local service delivery partners	Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1385486556734/1385486648146
CanNor Grant Programs	Supports startups, expansions, Indigenous and non-Indigenous entrepreneurs; delivered via CanNor and regional partners	Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1368815784186/1368815799374
Government of Northwest Territories – SEED Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development	Supports startups, expansion, asset acquisition, market development, tourism, emergency relief; locally managed programs	Northwest Territories	https://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/SEED
Prosper NWT (formerly NWT BDIC)	Offers flexible debt financing options, business advisory services, digital advisory services, and temporary relief	Northwest Territories	https://prospernwt.ca/
Community Futures Program	Loans, advisory, and business support services for small businesses in northern and rural regions	Northwest Territories	https://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/services/community-futures-program
Nunavut Business Credit Corporation (NBCC)	Provides credit to Nunavut businesses, particularly those not serviced by traditional lenders	Nunavut	https://www.nbcc.nu.ca/
Atuqtuarvik Corporation	Provides financing, including loans and equity investments, to Inuit-owned businesses in Nunavut	Nunavut	https://atuqtuarvik.com/

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Government of Northwest Territories – Business Funding Programs	Sectoral and community streams covering market development, asset support, trade, recovery, etc.; broad spectrum of entrepreneur needs	Northwest Territories	https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/services/funding-programs
Procurement Programs			
Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business (PSIB) Set-Aside Program	Federal departments mandated to allocate minimum 5% of total contract value to qualified Indigenous businesses	Pan-territorial	https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1696513417823/1696513480139
Yukon First Nations Procurement Policy – Bid Value Reductions (BVR)	Provides Yukon First Nation businesses with priority access to government contracts to foster collaboration between territorial government and Indigenous communities	Yukon	https://yukon.ca/sites/default/files/yfnpp_posters.pdf
Government of Northwest Territories – Business Incentive Policy (BIP)	Gives preference in government contracts to locally-owned and operated businesses in NWT to drive economic growth	Northwest Territories	https://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/en/services/business-incentive-policy
Nunavummi Nangminiaqqtunik Ikajuuti (NNI Policy)	Gives preference to Inuit-owned businesses in territorial procurement to ensure equitable contract allocation and build capacity	Nunavut	https://nni.gov.nu.ca/sites/nni.gov.nu.ca/files/NNI-Policy-%20English%20-%202017.pdf
Incubators, Accelerators , Training Programs, and Advisory Services			
EntrepreNorth	Empowers Indigenous entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses by offering culturally grounded business programming, mentorship, and peer networking	Pan-territorial	https://www.entreprenorth.ca/

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Yukon Chamber of Commerce	The main business association in the Yukon; advocates for businesses, and provides networking opportunities, training, and resources	Yukon	https://www.yukonchamber.com/
Yukonstruct Society	A non-profit that runs a community innovation hub with co-working along with business growth programs for early-stage entrepreneurs	Yukon	http://yukonstruct.com/
Northlight Innovation	A community innovation hub in Whitehorse that hosts Yukonstruct and other innovation-focused organizations	Yukon	https://www.canada.ca/en/Northern-economic-development/news/2018/10/northlight-innovation.html
Indigenous Incubator Inc.	Offers business skills and trades training that support Indigenous economic development	Pan-territorial	https://indigenousinc.org/
Incubator for Digital Entrepreneurship in the Arctic (IdEA)	Provides collaborative opportunities in remote communities; creates digitally and economically-centred programs and encourages local innovation	Nunavut, Alaska	https://arcticdata.io/catalog/portals/ArcticIDEA
Capital Skills Program	Equips diverse entrepreneurs, including Indigenous entrepreneurs, with financial, business, and networking skills	Pan-territorial	https://www.torontomu.ca/diversity/reports/capital-skills-evaluation-report/
Northern Recovery Incubator (NRI)	Sector-specific initiative focused on skills and capacity building within Northern Indigenous tourism	Nunavut	https://www.torontomu.ca/diversity/reports/strengthening-canada-s-indigenous-tourism-sector--evaluation-of-/

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Nunavut Economic Developers Association (NEDA)	Supports and grows the local business ecosystem throughout Nunavut	Nunavut	https://www.nunavuteda.com/c/neda-information?post_login_redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nunavuteda.com%2F
Northwest Territories Community Futures Association (NWT CFA)	Supports local economic development in NWT communities through a network of Community Futures Development Corporations, offering loans and counselling	Northwest Territories	https://www.nwtcfa.ca/
The Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce	Represents the business community in the NWT, providing advocacy, networking, and support	Northwest Territories	https://www.nwtchamber.com/
Baffin Business Development Corporation (BBDC)	A Community Futures organization for the Qikiqtaaluk region; provides financial assistance and advisory services to new or expanding small businesses	Nunavut (Qikiqtaaluk region)	http://baffinbdc.ca/
Canada-Nunavut Business Service Centre (CNBSC)	Assists businesses in Nunavut with information, resources, and contacts for starting or growing a business	Nunavut	https://kcfi.ca/our-services/cnbsc/
Northern Projects Management Office (NPMO)	Coordinates major resource development and infrastructure projects across territories in partnership with federal departments to facilitate Indigenous and local business participation	Pan-territorial	https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1370267347392/1370267428255

Organization Name	Description	Scope (Territory)	Link
Kivalliq Business Development Centre	Offers financing and advisory services to entrepreneurs in the Kivalliq region	Nunavut (Kivalliq region)	https://kfdc.ca/

Table A3

Budget 2025 allocations for infrastructure investment in the Territorial North

Program or Fund	Amount	Timeline	Primary Beneficiaries	Impact on Entrepreneurship
Total infrastructure	\$115.2 billion	5 years (2025–2030)	General infrastructure	Indirect impact; improves operating environment
Indigenous water and wastewater	\$2.3 billion	10 years	Indigenous communities	Indirect impact; addresses TRC's Call to Action 19 foundation
Housing development	\$2.8 billion	10 years	Communities	Indirect impact; addresses housing security
Arctic Infrastructure Fund	\$1 billion	4 years	Transportation projects	Supports existing business; construction sector opportunity
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada project delivery	\$25.5 million	4 years	Project management	Administrative; no direct business support
CanNor operations	\$41.7 million	4 years	Agency operations	\$3.7 million for Indigenous business support
Build Communities Strong Fund	\$51 billion	10 years	Infrastructure, housing, food production	Potential for local entrepreneurship if procurement requirements included

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